MRC Medical Research Council

Guidance for Applicants and Award Holders 2014

Version 4.1
Last updated 4 August 2014

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Please note that there are annexes that cover additional information and requirements for grant schemes other than Research grants These additional documents can be found on the MRC website and should be read in conjunction with this handbook.

1. Introduction

The Medical Research Council (MRC) funds research in the field of medical science by awarding grants to Research Organisations (ROs) to fund research on specific projects. Funding decisions are made by research boards and a number of panels, after the proposals they receive have been assessed by external reviewers. Each of the boards and panels is responsible for an area of medical science that together make up the MRC portfolio. They hold their own research budgets, and review and manage the funding of scientific activity within their specialist areas.

The MRC award funding in both Responsive Mode and Managed Mode:

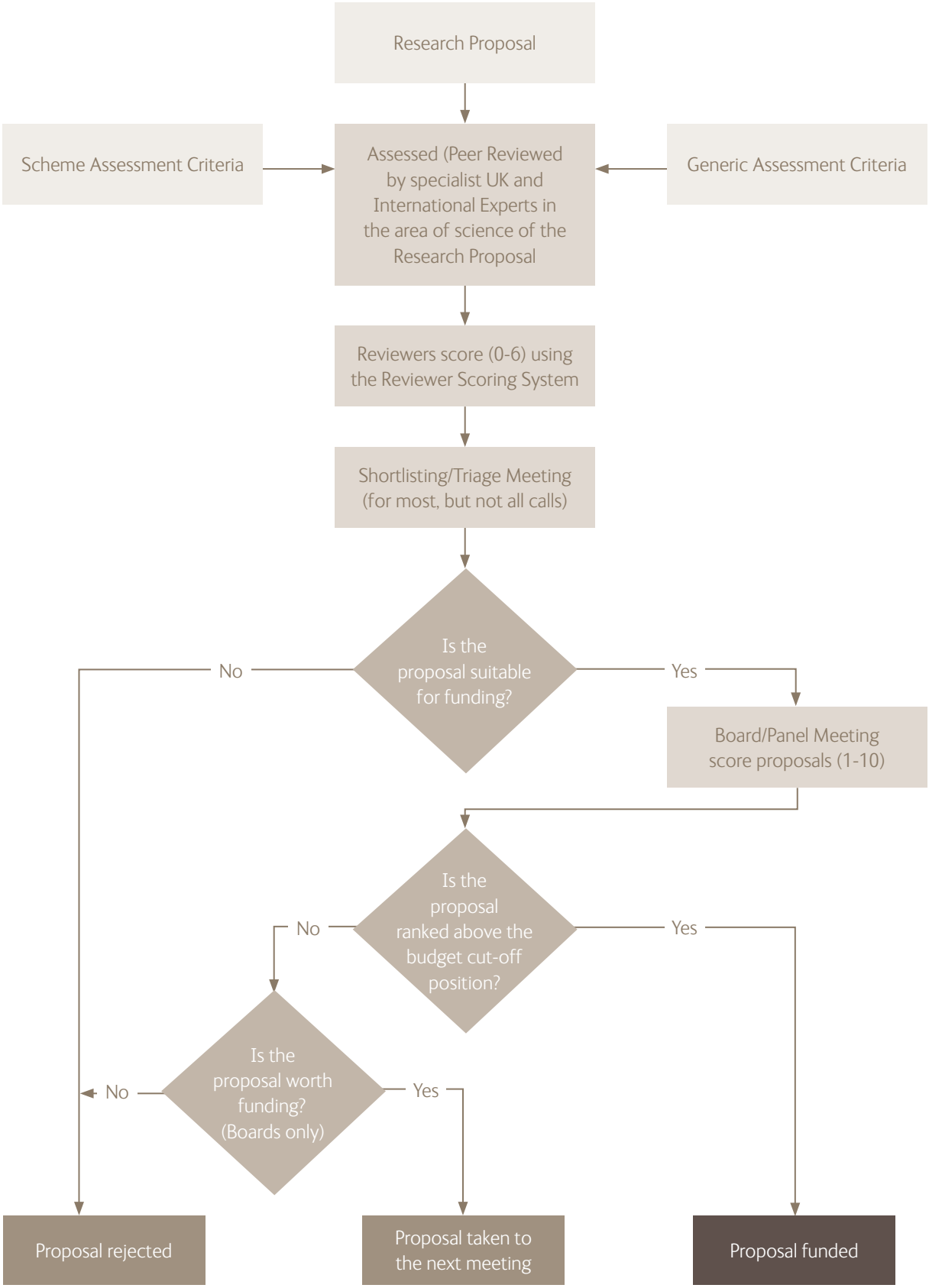
Responsive Mode is for unsolicited research proposals submitted to boards (and some panels) by anyone eligible to apply to MRC for funding at any time and in any field of research relevant to MRC's remit.

Managed Mode are proposals submitted in response to calls for proposals and targeted funding mechanisms. They will usually include detailed eligibility criteria and often a call for full proposals will be preceded by a call for outline proposals. These are one-off calls which will be focused on a key strategic area.

When the application is received by the MRC, it goes through the stages detailed on page 6.
Please note: not all stages are applicable to every call.

This guidance is aimed at helping applicants through the process. Further assistance is also available on www.mrc.ac.uk. If you need help in completing the form, please contact the Je-S helpdesk:

- Email: JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk
- Phone: +44 (0) 1793 44 4164*


Research Proposal
Scheme Assessment Criteria
Assessed (Peer Reviewed by specialist UK and International Experts in the area of science of the Research Proposal
Generic Assessment Criteria
Reviewers score (0-6) using the Reviewer Scoring System
Shortlisting/Triage Meeting (for most, but not all calls)
Is the proposal suitable for funding?
No
Yes
Board/Panel Meeting score proposals (1-10)
Is the proposal ranked above the budget cut-off position?
No
Yes
Is the proposal worth funding? (Boards only)
No
Yes
Proposal rejected
Proposal taken to the next meeting
Proposal funded

2. Who can apply – Research Organisations and Applicants

2.1 Types of Research Organisations (ROs)

The Principal Investigator MUST be based at the lead organisation which must be one of the following:

- **Higher Education Institutions**
  All UK Higher Education Institutions that receive grant funding from one of the UK higher education funding bodies are eligible to receive funds for research, postgraduate training and associated activities. These bodies consist of Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DEL).
- **Independent Research Organisations**
  A number of Independent Research organisations (IROs) are also eligible to apply for funding. A full list of IROs and the application process to become an IRO can be found on the RCUK website.
- **Government Funded Organisations (other than MRC funded Units and Institutes)**
  Government-funded organisations such as PHE or the Met Office can apply for MRC funding ONLY as a co-applicant. The PI can apply for 80% of Full Economic Costs in the same way as all other CoIs.
  Institutes and Units funded by other Research Councils are eligible to apply as a lead applicant for MRC funding due to a reciprocal arrangement between councils. They should also apply for 80% of Full Economic Costs.
- **MRC Units/Institutes**
  MRC Units/Institutes can only apply for Managed Mode Calls as a lead applicant, but can apply as a co-applicant to both Responsive and Managed Mode calls.
- **University Units (former MRC Units)**
  University Units can apply as an HEI. However, any core programmes in a similar area of science to that covered in the proposal, MUST be listed in the 'Other Support' section of the proposal form.

2.2 Responsibilities of Research Organisations

- By submitting a proposal to the MRC, a RO indicates their formal acceptance of the proposal, their acceptance of the terms and conditions of an MRC award, and the approval of the salaries and resources sought.
- Administrative authorities have responsibility for ensuring that the salaries and resources cited in the proposals are sufficient to undertake the proposed research, to attract sufficiently experienced and skilled staff, and represent good value for money.

2.3 People named on the grant

2.3.1 The Principal Investigator (PI)

The PI is responsible for the intellectual leadership of the research project and for the overall management of the research. He/she will be the council's main contact for the proposal. There can only be ONE PI on any proposal.

The PI MUST be based at the RO at which the award will be administered ie the Lead Organisation.

Individuals can hold more than one grant at a time. The award of a grant does not guarantee any further commitment to funding by the MRC.

MRC will consider proposals from any UK-based researcher who is based at an eligible RO and can demonstrate that they will direct the proposed research and be actively engaged in carrying it through.

The minimum formal qualification required is a graduate degree, though it would normally be expected that an applicant would have been awarded a PhD. Proposals involving less experienced researchers should normally include a named senior colleague (unless applying for a NIRG or Fellowship).

If the PI leaves the RO for any reason, the RO must notify the MRC and seek permission for a named alternative. It would normally be expected that one of the CoIs would take on the role of PI where CoIs are present. If the PI is moving to another RO, it may be possible to transfer the grant. If the PI wishes to do this, they need to contact the MRC.

2.3.2 Co-Investigators (CoIs)

The PI may be supported by a number of co-investigators named on the application. A CoI assists the PI in the management and leadership of the research project. CoIs should be based in the UK, however overseas CoIs can be included when they provide expertise not available in the UK. All CoIs must have a verified Je-S Account.

2.3.3 Overseas Researchers

Researchers from overseas institutions may be included in a proposal as a CoI subject to prior discussion with the relevant Programme Manager and where invited to do so, for example where the nature of the research makes this necessary. Any prior discussion with the MRC should be noted in the cover letter of the Je-S application.

2.3.4 Project Partners

A project partner is an organisation or individual who is providing a substantial contribution (either direct or indirect) to the project, either in-kind or financially, and will not take any funds out of the project. They cannot be from the same research organisation as the PI or any of the Co-Is. Their details should be included in the Project Partner section of the application form and a letter of support MUST be attached to the application. The financial value of the contribution should be included on the Je-S form. Where the input is important to the project but has no significant financial value, a nominal sum of £1 may be entered as the value of the contribution.

Where the project partner is industrial, applicants must follow the guidance relating to MRC Industrial Collaborative Awards (MICAs) as outlined in section 4.2.5 and on the MICA section of the website, including a MICA form and a signed Heads of Terms with the application.

Any collaborations with individuals or other departments within the same organisation as the PI or any of the Co-Is should be noted in the Case for Support only.

Project Partner Letter of Support Guidance

Each Project Partner must provide a Project Partner letter of support, of no more than 2 sides of A4 or equivalent on headed paper or by email. Emails must be included as an attachment to the grant on submission via Je-S. The letter or email should be written when the proposal is being prepared and should be targeted specifically to the project, it must therefore be dated within 6 months of the date of submission of the proposal. To provide assurance that the project partner has authorised the proposed contribution or commitment the letter or email should be signed by the named contact, stating the capacity in which they are providing the sign off. Project Partner letters of support that merely indicate that an organisation is interested in the research are not permitted. The individual named as contact for the Project Partner organisation cannot also be named as staff, for example Co-Investigator on a grant proposal.

A well written letter of support will confirm the organisation's commitment to the proposed project by demonstrating the benefits of the collaboration, its relevance and potential impact. The Project Partner letter or email should, identify the value, relevance and possible benefits of the proposed work to the partner, the period of support, the full nature of the collaboration/support and how the partner will be involved in the project and provide added value. Where relevant to the project, details should be provided of the projected market size, customers and sales and how the organisation will commercialise the technology beyond the project. Project Partner contributions, whether in cash or in kind, should be explained in detail in the project partner letter of support. Detail of how this support relates to the proposal as a whole should be included in the case for support and in the Pathways to Impact attachment.

No other letters of support from the Project Partner should be attached, except in exceptional cases. The Research Councils reserve the right to remove all other supporting letters from proposals. Applicants should refer to Call specific guidance for information regarding acceptable letters of support.

All partner contributions, whether in cash or in-kind, should be explained in detail in the Case for Support, including the equivalent value of any in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions can include staff time, access to the internet, access to equipment, sites or facilities, the provision of data, software or materials.

Additional information requirements where human tissue/participants are being provided:
Where the project partner, (whether an individual or organisation), is responsible for recruitment of people as research participants and/or providing human tissue, then list them as a project partner on the proposal form and enter a nominal sum of £1 for the value of the contribution.. Details should be included in the case for support and a letter of support MUST be attached to the application which includes the following information:

- The project partner has agreed to recruit the participants/provide tissue
- That what is being supplied is suitable for the research being undertaken
- That the quantity of tissue (where relevant) being supplied is suitable, but not excessive for achieving meaningful results

The letter of support must be an integral part of the application (as an attachment) and must focus on the proposal it accompanies.

2.3.5 Sub-Contractors

A sub-contractor is contracted by the lead organisation to carry out work or provide a service for the project. They are being paid a set amount for a set piece of work. For example if the ROs involved in the research do not have the required technology, such as specialist scanners to carry out a specific area of the project, they may decide to contract this work to another organisation. This should be costed as one sum on the application and must not include any indirect or estates costs. Subcontracting will be funded at the standard FEC rate for the call (usually 80%). Gene sequencing can be requested at 100%.

Research Organisation collaboration, CoIs and Project Partners are not sub-contractors and should be included in the appropriate section of the application.

All sub-contracted work should be subjected to external competition to ensure best value for money through competitive purchasing processes. Where this is not possible because of the specialist nature of the work involved, it must be fully justified in the Justification of Resources.

2.4 Important considerations when applying

2.4.1 Duration of employment

A PI or CoI must have a contract of employment with the RO for the duration of the grant prior to application (except NIRGS and Fellowships). If a PI or a CoI is to leave their post prior to a project ending, the RO has responsibility for ensuring there are suitable arrangements in place to replace that PI or CoI.

2.4.2 Responsibilities of Applicants

- MRC expects all of the researchers it funds, both clinical and non-clinical, to adopt the highest achievable standards in the conduct of their research. This means exhibiting impeccable scientific integrity and following the principles of good research practice detailed in the HMRC Good Research Practice Guidelines (2012)H.
- Submitting a proposal to MRC signifies acceptance of the RCUK Terms and Conditions (See Appendix 2), the MRC Additional Terms and Conditions and any award-specific Terms and Conditions, as specified on the award letter, for the entire life of the award.

2.4.3 Multiple applications and resubmissions

Applications previously declined by the MRC or another Research Council or funder will not be considered by the MRC within 12 months (from the date of submission to the original Research Council) unless invited (in writing) to resubmit by the MRC.

2.4.3.1 Research Grants

Each PI may submit a maximum of two MRC Research Grant proposals per research board (or panel) deadline. However, applicants are strongly advised to seek funding on the basis of the quality of their applications rather than the number that can be submitted.

The same or a similar Research Grant application (including New Investigator Research Grant applications) cannot be submitted to another UK funder eg. Research Council, the Department of Health (including NHS and NIHR), the Wellcome Trust or Cancer Research UK for consideration at the same time. This applies to multiple submissions or resubmissions of the same application.

If the same (or a substantially similar) grant application is awarded funds by another body before the MRC has made its decision, MRC will withdraw the MRC application from further consideration.

The applicant should take care to explain the relationship between separate applications, especially when they are related scientifically or through use of common resources.

Please note this does not include Outline applications. Revised Outline applications can be submitted to the next deadline.

Applicants must declare whether the new proposal relates to a previously submitted outline application or is a resubmission of a previous application. If this application is a resubmission, a cover letter explaining the differences must be attached (use 'cover letter' attachment option in Je-S).

If the application (Centre Grants, Programme Grants), is a renewal then the applicant must quote the previous grant reference and ensure that they submit a progress report as an attachment to the application.

2.4.3.2 Research Fellowships

A Fellowship applicant may have one fellowship proposal under consideration by MRC at any one point, however, may simultaneously apply to other funder's schemes.

Please refer to the Fellowship Handbook for further information.

2.5 What can be applied for by whom

2.5.1 Studentships

The MRC supports students by providing block grants and individual studentship awards via competitions such as CASE, direct to ROs who then recruit and manage the students. There are NO grants made by the MRC direct to individual students. Further details can be found on the website on MRC Studentships. Studentships can also be included on Centre and Partnership grants, but MUST NOT be included on Research Grants.

2.5.2 New Investigators

New investigators can apply for either a Fellowship, New Investigator Research Grant (NIRG) or Research Grant. Further details can be found at Fellowships or NIRGs.

2.5.3 Experienced Investigators

Please refer to MRC Funding opportunities for details of other types of grants which are available. Applications will come into either a board or panel (which have responsibility for a defined area of science – see Appendix 1) or may be in response to a call for applications in a strategic area of science as advertised MRC Calls and Highlight Notice sections of the website.

3. How to apply
Submission Process

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they apply to the correct call/board/type of grant. The applicant must read and understand any guidance. If in doubt, they should contact the relevant programme manager for that call for further information. Incorrect selection will incur significant delay and is very likely to cause deferral to a later meeting-typically a delay of 4 months or more.

For some schemes or calls applicants may need to submit Outline proposals before making full proposals. Usually feedback will be given at the end of the Outline stage. Such feedback is designed to help applicants improve the quality of their subsequent full proposal, if invited, to strengthen its competitiveness.

3.1 Using the Joint electronic-Submission System (Je-S)

Proposals for MRC grant schemes must be submitted through the Joint electronic-Submission (Je-S) system, https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk.

3.1.1 Applying for a Call or Board Round

Applicants can only access the proposal forms via Je-S between the call opening date and the deadline date. Please refer to MRC Call Deadlines for a list of forthcomin call opening and deadline dates.

A frequent cause of error when submitting an application arises from the applicant not ensuring that the Call selected on the first page of Je-S (when creating the document), corresponds to the selection made further in the application under 'Board' to allow the proposal to be directed to the correct Board/Panel/Committee scheme (see Je-S guidance). A detailed list of science areas covered by each of the board or panels is available in Appendix 1 of this handbook. For a research grant to a board, the applicant will need to choose the following options on Je-S:

- Standard Proposal (ie not Fellowship or Studentships),
- Research Grant (scheme)
- The relevant board eg MCMB Aug (Call)

NB – If the application is not being submitted to a board eg BMC: DPFS/DCS or MRC, then the scheme and Call will reflect this accordingly and the correct options should be chosen. These will be obvious and reflect what is being applied for. If you are unsure, please contact the MRC for guidance.

Each board will only have one Call so it is no longer necessary to choose the type of grant as a call in its own right. To select the type of grant applied for, please select the grant under the heading 'Grant Type' which includes the following options:

- Centre Grant
- Methodology Research Panel
- New Investigator Research Grant
- Partnership Grant
- Programme Grant
- Research Grant
- Strategic Grant

If the incorrect grant type is chosen, then MRC can amend this without the need to return the application to the applicant.

3.1.2 Who can submit

Please note that when an application is submitted through Je-S it does not pass directly to the MRC, but to the Research Councils' Shared Business Services Centre who will then process the submission for the MRC.

All applications need to be submitted through the lead RO which in turn must be Je-S registered. Further information and guidance is available on the Je-S Help Pages (accessible from the top-right of the Je-S home page). Technical information on accessing and navigating Je-S is available through the Je-S Help Pages (please use the 'show' link in the top left corner of the screen).

All applicants should consult the team responsible for proposal submissions at their RO to confirm how much time they will need to process the application and complete the submission process. All applications must be submitted to the MRC via the RCUK Je-S system by 4pm on the advertised closing date.

Applications received after the deadline will NOT be considered.

3.1.3 Appeals

MRC reserves the right to make funding decisions based on independent scientific judgements of its Board and Panel Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Members.

Please note that decisions of any MRC Board or Panel will not be open to appeal and applicants should refer to the resubmissions section (2.4.3).

MRC reserves the right to amend the application process.

4. The Application

All **FULL** applications consist of a number of components. The following components are mandatory:
- The Proposal Form

And the following attachments to it:
- CVs
- Publications
- Case for Support
- Justification Of Resources
- Pathways to Impact
- Data Management Plan

In addition each call may specify additional attached components such as:
- Covering Letter
- MICA form
- Heads of Terms
- Additional Costs Proforma: NHS Support and Treatment Costs
- Letters of Support (See Section 2.3.4)
- Animal Research Questions

These will be specified on the call guidance and any queries should be directed to the Board and Panel Support teams.

All **OUTLINE** applications should ONLY include:
- Outline Proposal Form
- Case for Support
- Any additional attachments that are requested in the Specific guidance for the Call applied for

Further details are provided in the following sections:

4.1 The Proposal Form

The Proposal Form provides a summary of the whole project. Some of the sections overlap with mandatory attachments such as Pathways to Impact as the attachments provide the detail required for decision making purposes.

The main headings include the following:
- **Organisation** where the grant should be held – This should be the lead RO which will be responsible for administering the grant
- **Project Title** – This should be no more than 150 characters and reflect the aim of the project
- **Start Date and Duration** – The anticipated start date should be realistic and would normally be between one month and six months after the date of the decision making board or panel. Please refer to call guidance as this may vary depending on what is being applied for. The duration of a grant will typically be from 12 to 60 months. It should reflect the work to be undertaken and may be restricted/specified in the call/scheme guidance. Most research grants are around 36 months in duration. Programme grants run for 60 months and partnership grants from between 12 and 60 months.

Once a grant has been issued, grant holders are required to make every effort to start on the agreed date. It is recognised, however, that this is not always possible due to unexpected difficulties in, for example, recruitment data access. In circumstances where such a delay is unavoidable, the MRC allows a degree of flexibility where grants may commence within three months of the agreed start date on the grant letter. Confirmation of the actual start date must be sent via Je-S as soon as the research commences. Any change to a start date will not affect the cash limit even if the start date moves to a new financial year.

If a research grant has not commenced within three months of the date stated in the issue of the grant (and the abstract and start certificate not received within four months), and a later date has not been approved, the offer of the grant will be withdrawn. The grant may not then proceed without further written confirmation from MRC that it has been re-issued.

- **Applicants** – This should include the PI and all CoIs involved in the project.
- **Objectives** – What is the project aiming to achieve? The objectives of the proposed project should be listed in order of priority and should be those that the Investigators would wish the Council to use as the basis for evaluation of work upon completion of any grant awarded.
- **Summary** – A layman's summary of what your project involves – Provide a plain English summary of the proposed work, explaining:
  - the context of the research
  - its aims and objectives
  - its potential applications and benefits
- **Technical Summary** – A more in depth summary aimed at Reviewers who have some knowledge of the area of science involved
- **Academic Beneficiaries** –
  - How will the research benefit other researchers in the field?
  - Identify whether there are any academic beneficiaries in other disciplines and if so, how they will benefit and what will be done to ensure they benefit?
- **Communication Plan** – This should include potential impacts for academic and non-academic users. The MRC attaches great importance to the communication of research findings both within and beyond the academic community
- **Impact Summary** – This should address the following two questions:

  Who will benefit from this research? – List any beneficiaries from the research, for example those who are likely to be interested in or to benefit from the proposed research – both directly or indirectly. It may be useful to think of beneficiaries as 'users' of the research outputs, both immediately, and in the longer term.

  Beneficiaries **must consist of a wider group** than that of the investigators' immediate professional circle carrying out similar research. For example:
  - Are there any beneficiaries within the commercial private sector who will benefit from the research?
  - Is there anyone, including policy-makers, within international, national, local or devolved government and government agencies or regulators who would benefit from this research?
  - Are there any beneficiaries within the public sector, third sector or any others who might use the results to their advantage? Examples include museums, galleries and charities.
  - Are there any beneficiaries within the wider public?

  How will they benefit from this research? – Describe the relevance of the research to these beneficiaries, identifying the potential for impacts arising from the proposed work. Please consider the following when framing your response:
  - Explain how the research has the potential to contribute to the nation's health, wealth or culture. For example:
  - Fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom?
  - Increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy?
  - Enhancing quality of life, health and creative output?
  - What are the potential impacts likely to be, and what is their importance?
  - What are the realistic timescales for the benefits to be realised, and how will this research contribute?
  - What research and professional skills will staff working on the project develop which they could apply in all employment sectors?

- **Summary of Resources Required for the Project (See Section 5)** – Staffing, equipment and other resources required to carry out the project
- **Technical and Ethical Considerations** – Please complete each of these sections with the required information/by ticking the appropriate boxes

Further guidance is available through the various Je-S helptexts provided for each section

4.2 Je-S application attachments

Attachments must conform to the following requirements:

- All attachments must be completed in a non serif font size of 11 pt such as Arial (not Arial Narrow) (excluding text on diagrams and the use of mathematical symbols).
- A minimum of single line spacing and standard character spacing must be used.
- Margins must not be less than 2cm.

Applications will be checked by the RCUK Shared Services Centre soon after the closing date. Any component(s) of an application which do not meet these rules will be returned for amendment before being validated for peer review. A late response in amending returned elements of the application will result in the application being withdrawn from the round.

4.2.1 CVs and List of Publications

When attaching multiple CVs to an application, please include separate CVs and list of publications for each of the following.

- Principal Investigators
- Co-investigators
- Named individual research staff

4.2.1.1 CVs

CVs should be a maximum of 2 sides of A4.

The CV should cover:

- Employment History:
  - A description of your current post and the source(s) of funding for this post (including dates)
  - List & description of previous posts (including dates)
  - Educational Qualifications (including dates)

- Please also state whether you are:
  - Clinically qualified
  - Clinically active

The CV should explain any breaks in employment or publication record, for example as a result of a career break or parental leave. The MRC is committed to eliminating unjustified discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. Details of our Equality and Diversity policy are available at http://www.mrc.ac.uk/About/Informationandstandards/EqualityandDiversity/index.htm

4.2.1.2 Publications

The publications list should highlight relevant and recent publications, which should fit on one side of A4 in Arial 11-point font (or equivalent).

4.2.2 Case for Support

4.2.2.1 General Guidance

The case for support should include the scientific proposals, information on past achievements, details of the environment, people involved and references and needs to be attached to the application in Je-S.

NB Justification of resources is not required in the Case for Support as this is a separate document which is required to be attached to each Je-S application.

The contents of the Case for Support will depend on the scheme that is being applied for. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information on the assessment procedure, which provides detailed information on what referees, boards and panels are looking for.

The guidelines below list general points that should be addressed when writing the Case for Support. However, each proposal is unique, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all the reasonable questions the referees and MRC research boards need to address are answered in the proposal – especially if the plan or resources are unusual or complex.

All information that the applicant wishes to be considered as part of their research proposal (within the page limits stipulated) must be attached with their proposal form. **The proposal cannot be supplemented by further information past the deadline for submissions.**

The proposal and Case for Support will be sent out to a number of reviewers to read. Feedback from reviewers has shown that they are keen to see clarity, succinctness and accessibility.

Any proposals which do not meet the following requirements will be returned to the applicant unprocessed, for submission to a subsequent board meeting.

- It must be in Arial 11pt typeface (or equivalent).
- It must have margins of 2cms all sides.
- It must only include one PDF document for the Case for Support, which must be within the page limits stipulated below.
- The only annexes which will be accepted are:
  1. Extra detail on ethical, risk or patient safety data issues;
  2. NHS Trust Contribution Information, as outlined in the section below on Full Trial Grants.
  3. Project Partners letters of support , see Section 2.3.4
  4. Limited additional annexes may be allowed **in exceptional circumstances** for proposals addressing large population studies, including clinical trials.
  5. Applicants who are MRC staff can submit a progress report on previous MRC grants held.
- Proposals containing additional annexes which have not been previously discussed with the relevant Programme Manager will be rejected.
- Any unpublished data must be included in the Case for Support.
- Manuscripts in press or submitted to journals should NOT be included.
- We only require copies of letters of support/collaboration where Project Partners are involved or where provision of human tissue or access to patients is essential for the study.
- When uploading PDF documents, please ensure they are given a logical file name and description so that information can easily be found.
- Ensure all pages of each document are numbered.
- Set out the scientific case under each of the headings specified in the guidance notes for the specific scheme to which the applicant is applying.
- All the points in the generic guidance must be addressed as well as those in call-specific guidance
- Failure to provide required components or information may mean that your proposal will be delayed or its assessment prejudiced.
- Proposals that are seriously deficient in the information they provide are likely to be returned to you unprocessed.

4.2.2.2 Page Length

Each scheme has its own limits on the number of pages in the Case for Support. In the case of specific call for proposals, you must adhere to the specific call guidelines produced.

Your proposal will automatically be rejected if you submit a proposal over the maximum page limit.

Page limits in Case for Support PDF documents (Page limits include references, but not allowable annexes)	
Scheme	**Page Limit**
Centre grant – outline	8
Centre grant – full	Size will reflect the complexity of the grant – please refer to relevant Programme Manager for further guidance
DPFS/DCS – Outline	10
DPFS/DCS – Full	26
Global health – outline	6 (Plus one extra for references)
Global health – full	12
New Investigator Research Grant Award	8
Partnership grant – 3 years or less	8 (For a collaboration grant the MRC asks for a different set of criteria in the Case for Support (details of current layout on the main MRC website). You should ensure that this layout is used rather than the one for normal grants).
Partnership Grant – more than 3 years	12 (For a collaborative grant – see above)
Programme grant – outline	3 (Including references)
Programme grant – full	12
Research grant – 3 years or less	8
Research grant – more than 3 years	12

4.2.2.3 Case for Support Content

Please note:

- The Case for Support must not exceed 10MB, with all other attachment types having a 5MB size limit (avoid the use of large colour figures as these will increase file size. There is no guarantee that documents will be reproduced in colour for the Peer review process).
- RCUK also requires information on public engagement in science. To prevent duplication, applicants should make reference to the 'Impact Summary' from the Pathways to Impact document, rather than re-stating this information.
- Please attach as a PDF document, especially if mathematical symbols are used in the content.

Title

The title of the proposed project.

Importance

- Explain the need for research in this area, and the rationale for the particular lines of research planned.
- Justify the research either through its importance for human health, or its contribution to relevant areas of basic biomedical science.
- Give sufficient details of other past and current research to show that the aims are scientifically justified, and to show that the work will add distinct value to what is already known, or in progress.
- Where relevant, explain how plans benefit, fulfill unmet needs or contribute to current plans in the health service or industry.
- Where the research plans involve creating resources or facilities, or forming consortia, networks or centres of excellence, the case will need to address the potential added value, as well as issues of ownership, direction and sustainability.

Scientific potential

People and track record

- Each of the CVs will be uploaded separately as attachments in Je-S. If it is not obvious, the applicant may elaborate on why the group is well qualified to do this research in the Case for Support.
- Explain how each of the investigators named in the proposal would work together and outline other major collaborations important for the research.
- The applicant should acknowledge any previous or current MRC funding and describe progress to date on delivery of this research. The quality and productivity of the recent work will be a factor in assessing the likely quality of future work.
- If the applicant has not been active in research recently, simply state this.
- Describe any other factors which the applicant considers may promote delivery of the proposal.

Environment

- Describe how the scientific or clinical environment(s) in which the research will be done will promote delivery of the proposed research.
- Explain how the research will benefit from facilities provided by the host RO.
- Describe any clinical, commercial, or organisational dependencies necessary to support the research, or to help translate it into practice.

Research plans

- Give details of the general experimental approaches, study designs, and techniques that will be used. It is not necessary to describe each experiment, but enough detail must be given to show why the research is likely to be competitive in its field.
  - o Highlight plans which are particularly original or unique.
  - o Describe all foreseeable human studies and animal experiments (in as much detail as possible at this stage).
  - o Explain in greater detail how new techniques, or particularly difficult or risky studies, will be tackled and alternative approaches should these fail.
  - o Identify facilities or resources you will need access to.
  - o Give sufficient detail to justify the resources requested.
- If this is a pilot work or proof of principle proposal, give a brief description of likely subsequent proposals if the work is successful. Please note that any proposals that are intended to lead directly to a clinical trial must be discussed at an early stage with the relevant Programme Manager
- Explain opportunities or plans for pursuing commercial exploitation.

NB If the MRC require additional information on any points which seem contentious or unclear, there is an opportunity to do this when responding to referees' comments.

Ethics and research governance

- Describe briefly the ethical issues arising from any involvement of people, human samples or personal data in the research proposal. Please give details of how any specific risks to human participants will be controlled, and of any new animal research MRC would be supporting. Please refer to Section 8 of this handbook for further guidance.
- Describe the ethical review and research governance arrangements that would apply to the work done.

Data preservation for sharing

Data Management Plans (DMP) – Changes from 1 May 2012

From 1 May 2012, the Data Management plan replaces the Data Sharing Statement previously required as part of the Case for Support. All applicants submitting funding proposals to the MRC are required to include a Data Management Plan which should be submitted as an attachment'. Please see section 4.2.6 below.

Exploitation and dissemination

- Is the proposed research likely to generate commercially exploitable results?
- What arrangements and experience does the research group or the host research organisation have to take forward the commercial exploitation of research in this area?
- Other than publication in peer reviewed journals, indicate how any results arising from the research will be disseminated so as to promote or facilitate take up by users in the health services.

4.2.3 Justification of Resources

Cross Council guidance on writing a good Justification of Resources (JoR) document is available on the Je-S Help Pages.

The role of the JoR is to aid reviewers when assessing proposals so that they can make an informed judgement on whether the resources requested are appropriate for the research posed.

The JoR should be no more than 2 sides of A4 which is an attachment to the proposal. This statement should be used to justify the resources required to undertake the research project and is mandatory. The JoR should explain why the resources requested are appropriate for the research proposed taking into account the nature and complexity of the research proposal. It should not be simply a list of the resources required as this is already given in the Je-S form. Whatever the nature of the application, all items requested in the Je-S form must be justified in the JoR.

The JoR is a free text document. So that applicants do not miss any costings from the Je-S form or any justifications for the items requested, we recommend that you match the costs to the proposal headings below (where appropriate).

Cost to the proposal	Justification needed	Questions to consider and answer in the justification
Staff – directly incurred posts Researcher / Technician	Need to justify why a researcher / technician is needed for the proposed work and why the proposed time input is appropriate.	Is the work of appropriate scientific technical difficulty to warrant employing a Research Assistant (RA)? Why has the level requested for the RA been asked for?
Staff – directly allocated posts Principal Investigator (PI), Co-Investigator (CoI) and Research Co-Investigator time (unless working 100% of their hours on the grant eg. Fellows)	• The time that the PI and CoI spends on the grant has to be justified. • A PI or CoI can not request time for supervising postgraduate research students, writing publications after the end of the project, writing grant applications or peer review.	How much time do you intend to dedicate to the project? Will you be doing all the research yourself? What work packages are the PI and CoIs involved with and why? Have you factored in enough time to work with project partners or visiting researchers and collaborators? Are you only managing the staff on the project?
Travel and Subsistence	Need to give a full break down of the costs in the Je-S form for example how many people are travelling and where are they going and why?	If you are planning to visit people to discuss your research, you should explain why those are the right people to talk to and how they can contribute to you meeting your objectives. If you plan to attend conferences, you should comment on the advantages of conference attendance and give an indication of the number you want to attend during the grant, who will attend these and the type you want to go to – national/international/ general/subject specific etc. Travel costs incurred when using facilities should be included where necessary.
Other Directly Incurred Costs	Need to give a description of what has been requested and why? Every item requested must be justified, however small.	You must justify the need for any item requested. You need to explain what the item will be needed for and also justify the cost. If you are asking for a desktop and a laptop, then justify why both are needed. It is expected that the University will provide computers and laptops for the PIs and CoIs and other research staff on continuing contracts. You must provide a breakdown of any costs which are incurred for bulk items.

Cost to the proposal	Justification needed	Questions to consider and answer in the justification
Directly Incurred Equipment	Why is the item needed?	Why can the item not be used/borrowed from elsewhere. If asking for more than 50% contribution by MRC, why can the RO not pay a higher contribution?
Impact	Need to justify any resources requested to support the impact plan. For example: • including staff time, travel and subsistence, • consultancy fees.	Full justification (what it is and why you need it) of each item requested. Please note: patent costs and other IP costs are NOT eligible; Universities already receive funding for these from HEIF. Also estate and indirect costs should NOT be requested for Technology Transfer Officers (TTOs). These are project specific resources.
Other Directly Allocated Costs	In some cases, such as use of internal facilities and shared staff costs, the basis of the costing doesn't need to be justified, but the need for the resources does.	You need to explain what these are and why you need to use them.
Estates and indirect costs	Does not need to be justified	MUST NOT be included for technicians, research support staff, or staff employed at MRC Units/ Institutes or MRC University Units (except for new posts at MRC University Units).
Research Facilities (at Research organisations)	Only time needs to be justified	You need to explain what you are using the facility for and why you need to use this particular facility.
Pooled Technicians	For example workshop or laboratory technicians based at the University. Usually not named.	The MRC would expect these costs to be included in the Estates/Indirect Costs for the RO. Where the technicians used are of a specialist nature and not included in the Estates/Indirect Costs for the RO, they should be fully justified in the Justification of Resources as to why they are required and why the costs are not included in the ROs Estate/ Indirect Costs.
Infrastructure Technicians	For example Health and Safety Officer at University. Cost should be displayed separately to Estate and Indirect costs in the other Directly Allocated costs box.	Where the post is to fulfil a legal requirement, then the post does not need to be justified.
Exceptions eg PhD student	Need to justify why a PhD student is needed for the proposed work	Will a student be skilled enough to tackle the research problems, and will they in all likelihood get a thesis out of it? Costs for PhD studentships can ONLY be requested on Partnership or Centre grants.
Exceptions	Please see 'Financial Support' section.	

The main reasons for returning JoRs to PIs for amendments or for not funding proposals are:

- Costs stated in the Je-S form are not fully justified in the JoR e.g. the investigator time that has been asked for has not been justified. (Please note the investigator salary cost does not need to be justified, only the time asked for.)
- Costs/descriptions stated in the Je-S form do not match those in the JoR.
- Justifications for why an item is needed are not clear or are poor e.g. listing the items from the Je-S form without any description of why it is needed.
- If the PI time includes supervision of PhD students – this is not allowed

4.2.4 Pathways to Impact

This should be up to 2 x A4 pages and is primarily for detailing the activities which will promote potential economic and societal benefits.

4.2.4.1 Background

In March 2011, MRC transferred to the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) system. This now requires all applicants to include information on the potential economic and societal impacts of their research as part of their applications.

The Research Councils take a broad view of economic and societal impact, further information on all aspects of RCUK's approach to impact in research can be found at Pathways to Impact

4.2.4.2 Pathways to Impact statement

This must be uploaded as an attachment on Je-S and should describe what specific actions will be taken to ensure that the potential beneficiaries identified in the Impact Summary (on the proposal form) have the **opportunity** to benefit from the research. The Pathways to Impact Statement should:

- be specific – what is going to be done **throughout the lifetime of the grant** to facilitate maximum impact of the research?
- ensure that planned activities are appropriate to the research that will be undertaken. We would expect all investigators to be able to undertake activities beyond scientific presentation, but we are aware that the pathways to impact for basic research are likely to be different to those for translational research; examples of the variety of short and long-term impacts realised from different types of MRC funding can be found on the MRC website at http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Achievementsimpact/index.htm and through the evaluation reports of the latest available MRC Researchfish data at http://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/achievements/outputs-report/.
- only use as much space as needed; do not fill 2 pages if it is not appropriate;
- ensure that planned activities are feasible in terms of resource and that the activities can be delivered over the lifetime of the project;
- ask for any resources required to deliver the activities you have identified. These resources must be project-specific and you must justify the need for them (justification should be included in your Justification of Resources attachment);
- focus on non-academic beneficiaries, unless reaching academics beyond your own field of expertise is part of the critical pathway to delivering impact from your project;
- be aware that research is likely to have impacts over a range of timescales.

In completing both the Impact Summary and Pathways to Impact Statement, applicants should bear in mind the broad range of impacts that their research may have, spanning the advancement of scientific knowledge, health and wellbeing, economic competitiveness, policy development and the provision of skilled people to the workforce. MRC will use Pathways to Impact in the assessment of grant applications, but the primary route for capturing the impact of the science that MRC funds will continue to be through the MRC Researchfish (formerly E-Val).

4.2.4.3 Assessment

All applications to MRC will continue to be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Contribution to achieving the MRC's Strategic aims
- Potential for improving medical science
- Value for money

The Impact Summary and Academic Beneficiaries sections of the Je-S form, and the Pathways to Impact Statement will be used in the assessment of the proposal throughout the peer review process. Reviewers and Board/Panel members will be asked to consider the following points in their assessment of the proposal:

- **Identification of potential impact** –
  - Are all potential beneficiaries appropriately identified?
  - Are the key areas where impact could be explored during the course of the grant appropriately identified and clearly articulated?
  - Are the key areas where impact could be explored realistic?
- **Approach to delivering impact** –
  - Are the activities outlined by the applicant feasible and appropriate?
  - Are the activities likely to deliver the impacts the applicant has identified?
  - Does the applicant have the right team and people engaged to undertake the activities proposed?

4.2.4.4 Further Information

Further information regarding all aspects of RCUK's approach to impact in research, including further guidance on completing your 'Pathways to Impact' statement, can be found at: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/ke/impacts/Guidance/

4.2.5 Covering Letter

If required, a covering letter may be included as part of an application. It should be no more than 2 x A4 pages using 11 point Arial. The Covering letter can be used to cover details such as Conflicts of Interest, names of conflicted experts who should not be used as referees and if the application is a resubmission, details of how this application differs from that submitted previously. It MUST NOT be used to cover anything which should be included in the Proposal Form, Case for Support or other required attachments.

4.2.6 Data Management Plans (DMP)

All applicants submitting funding proposals (including research grants, fellowship grants) to the MRC MUST include a Data Management Plan as an attachment to their application on Je-S. This includes applications for the extension or renewal of existing funding. The DMP should comply with the MRC's policy on research data sharing. MRC Institutes and Units are required to submit one as part of the Quinquennial Review (QQR) report.

The DMP should demonstrate how the PI will meet, or already meets their responsibilities for research data quality, sharing and security. It should refer to any institutional and study data policies, systems and procedures and be regularly reviewed throughout the research cycle. Where the organisation is ISO 27001 compliant, the registration number should also be included.

The DMP is reviewed by peer reviewers alongside the Case for Support. It is advisable that all DMPs use the template to ensure consistency to make it easier to review. The guidance needs to be carefully read and adhered to as the quality of the DMP may have an impact on the peer review score and whether the application proceeds to board/panel.

Additionally, for all population & patient based studies, the DMP should indicate how the study meets the requirements of the MRC's detailed guidance on data sharing for population and patient studies, particularly around access criteria and independent oversight, the means for ensuring the study and its variables are readily discoverable, and specificity about use of formal data standards.

For MRC Institutes and Units, a DMP is developed as part of the Quinquennial Review (QQR) report (Directors may choose to develop more than one DMP, specific to particular programmes).

Level of Risk
Where the research involves human participant's, their data or tissues or where the research team hold identifiable data about these research participants, the level of risk regarding data management is much higher. In these instances, the DMP should be more detailed and include information on how these risks will be managed.

Length of DPM

Type of Study	Page Length
Population cohorts, genetic, omics and imaging data, biobanks, and other collections that are potentially a rich resource for the wider research community	Up to 3 x A4 pages
Longitudinal studies, involving a series of data collections	Up to 4 x A4 pages (unless agreed with the MRC prior to submitting the application)
All other research	For less complex research the DPM may be as short as quarter of a page up to a maximum of 3 x A4 pages

How should it be written?
The DMP should be written for two audiences: (a) **scientists** in the broad field of the area of science covered in the application; and (b) **technical experts** who are familiar with the prevailing data management practices. Most of the readers will be of type (a).

The information must be **concise**. The detail should be proportionate to the complexity of the study, the types of data being managed, their anticipated long-term value, and the anticipated data security requirements.

What to include
- The data management plan template should be used to develop a DMP to accompany a research proposal. If it is not used, then the applicant should ensure that all the topics listed on the template are addressed.
- For studies with a history of active data sharing, the DMP should include brief summary statistics on the performance and outputs of sharing [see Reporting on data sharing]
- MRC expects you to seek advice from data management experts in your organisationand use other sources of good practice to improve and innovate data management. If this means your DMP departs from some aspect of this guidance (or that on Data Sharing), explain succinctly why and how this is or will be more appropriate than the MRC guidance. It will aid your DMP if you can show the infrastructure is in place at your RO to ensure good practice is in place.
- Custodians of previously collected/generated research data ('legacy data'), applying for funds to use legacy data as part of a new funding request, should ensure that the DMP covers both existing and new data collection/generation.

Multiple funding agencies
Where research is co-funded between MRC and another organisation, the MRC's data sharing policy and these guidelines on the DMP will still apply. The relevant policies of the major UK funders of biomedical research are aligned on principles and most of their detailed requirements. Any apparent conflict in co-policies should be discussed with your Programme Manager or the applicant can email MRCdatasharing@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

Cost of Data Sharing
Applicants should include the costs related to their data sharing in the Resources section of the Proposal Form. This may include people, equipment, infrastructure and tools to manage, store, analyse and provide access to data. Where the costs of managing legacy data and sharing are substantial, the proposal should differentiate the resources and funding for:

- Collecting and "cleaning" new data
- Own research on newly-acquired and legacy data
- Ongoing data curation and preservation
- Providing access and data sharing.

4.2.7 MRC Industrial Collaboration Agreement (MICA)

If the proposal is to include an industry collaboration the application will need to include a MICA form (full applications only). The MRC will also require a Heads of Terms signed by each collaborator showing that they are willing to collaborate for the duration of the study. If the Heads of Terms option is not available under attachments, please upload under the 'MICA' heading and specify 'Heads of Terms' in the description field.

Applicant's should indicate in their covering letter that the application is a "MICA:" Failure to do so may lead to the application not being correctly processed.

Specific information on MICAs is available on the MRC website.

5. Resources – Full Economic Costing

All research grant proposals and post-doctoral fellowship applications will be costed on the basis of full economic costs (FEC). If a grant is awarded the MRC will provide funding at 80%[1] of the FEC and the RO(s) must agree to find the balance of FEC for the project from other resources. Please note – some calls have different FEC rates to the standard 80% eg. Global Health.

Universities and other Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) will use Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) methodology to calculate full economic costs. Other research organisations can apply for full economic costs provided that the methodology they adopt has been validated by the research councils as appropriate and robust.

5.1 Fund Headings

The application form requires that all costs are identified under the following 4 fund headings:

Directly Incurred Costs: Costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project, are charged as the cash value actually spent and are supported by an auditable record

- Staff
- Travel and subsistence
- Equipment
- Other costs

Directly Allocated Costs: The costs of resources used by a project that are shared by other activities. They are charged to projects on the basis of estimates rather than actual costs and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis

- Investigators' salary costs
- Estates
- Other directly allocated

Indirect Costs: Non-specific cost estimates charged across all projects that are not otherwise included as directly allocated costs. They include the costs of the research organisation's administration such as personnel, finance, library and some departmental services.

Exceptional Costs: Directly incurred costs that Research Councils fund at 100% of FEC. The two most common examples are; studentships on centre grants and costs directly incurred by overseas organisations. Capital items cannot be registered as exceptions under any circumstances.

5.1.1 Directly Incurred Costs

5.1.1.1 Staff

The payroll costs of all staff, full or part-time, who work on the project, and whose time can be supported by a full audit trail may be included. When a person is contracted to work 100% of their time on a single project (whether they are working full time or part time) timesheets are not necessary. In all other cases, timesheets or project records are required. The need for such staff should be justified in the Case for Support.

Research assistants, whether named or unnamed should be requested at a salary level commensurate with the skills, responsibilities, expertise and expertise necessary to carry out the proposed research activity. Where an application includes provision for a named fellow, researcher, technician or support staff, MRC will normally expect to award funds at the level requested as this should reflect their current salary.

Salary increments over the period of the project should be taken into account but not anticipated in future pay awards.

1 The percentage of funding may vary when Co-funders such as DFID are involved

The RO, as the employer, is responsible for the contracts of employment of the staff concerned and consequently for any redundancy or other compensatory payments that may be required. Work permits, if required, are a matter for direct negotiation between the RO and the relevant government departments.

For any one investigator, the maximum amount of time that Research Councils will fund across all the projects they support is a maximum of 1650 hours a year (equivalent to 37.5 hours a week, 44 weeks a year). All staff fields throughout the proposal should be entered using this formula when answering questions regarding percentage of time worked.

The total salary costs for any individual on all Research Council grants and fellowships must not exceed 100% FTE.

Where the proposal is to be submitted before the RO has agreed details of the any pending new pay scale revisions, the Research Councils expect that the proposal will be costed on the basis of the organisations present pay structure. As part of the reconciliation process, additional funds for extra costs will be provided (less any wider savings made) arising specifically from assimilation to new pay arrangements which were not known at the time of the application. Any additional funding will be based on the number and level of staff posts agreed for the award.

Researchers supported on open-ended or fixed-term contracts may apply for grants, and may request funds for their own salary. The Research Councils' conditions for grant awards do not include a requirement to appoint staff on a fixed-term basis. This is a matter for the employer to determine and is not related to eligibility for funding.

Please note that Investigators, researchers and technicians may be included as either Directly Incurred, Directly Allocated or Exceptions. 'Other Staff' can only be included as Directly Incurred.

- **PIs & CoIs:** Proposals will need to show the costs of time to be charged to the project by investigators. This will be derived from hours on the project and relevant salary rate (which could be based on an average or pool rate). Research Councils will not require time sheets to be completed as long as the individual is contracted to work 100% on the project. As previously stipulated, a project may outlast a post, but the expectation is that their current involvement in the proposal will be covered by a contract with the RO and that there are suitable arrangements in place to manage and take responsibility for an outgoing investigator.

- **Additional Staff:** Salaries may be sought for research, technical or other staff required to work full or part-time on the research. Research staff can comprise postgraduate and post-doctoral scientists (including social scientists), statisticians, research nurses etc. Please note however that costs for PhD studentships cannot be requested within MRC research or programme grants.

  Salaries may be sought at a level appropriate to the research or the experience of a known individual, where this is in accordance with the salary scales and terms and conditions of service applying at the prospective host institution, and is justified in the proposal. For posts requiring recruitment, the salaries may be sought at an appropriate level using the salary rate pool banding. Salary levels should take account of the previous experience and professional contribution of a named individual, as well as their research responsibilities.

- **Collaborative Researchers:** The MRC will consider meeting the salary costs of senior collaborative researchers, invited from a recognised centre in the UK or abroad, to work in the UK for up to one year giving full-time advice or assistance on the research project. Salaries should be calculated in relation to paid staff of equivalent status in the host RO, and the request should be net of any contributions from other sources which themselves must be declared in the Justification of Resources.

- **Infrastructure Technicians:** Infrastructure Technicians, whose costs are not included in the Estates or Indirect costs and whose time is shared across several projects or activities and will not be supported by an auditable record should be applied for under 'Other Directly Allocated Costs' as 'Infrastructure Technicians'. The costs need to be added as a single figure for the duration of the proposed research project as stated in the application. The Infrastructure Technician costs do not need to be justified in the 'Justification of Resources' section.

5.1.1.2 Travel & Subsistence

A proposal may include funds for travel and subsistence for use by Investigators and staff assigned to the project and where these are required by the nature of the work. Travel costs should be based on the most suitable and economical form of travel. In line with government instruction as of 24 May 2010, no travel should be undertaken by first class (by train), business class (by plane) or the equivalent thereof. All train travel should be by standard class and any flights should be at the economy rate. All applicants should actively seek best value for money where it is practical and feasible and should fully justify why the transport is required.

Subsistence and any catering costs for events should reflect the normal rates applying to the host research organisation and will need to be fully justified in the Justification for Resources. Please note that alcohol can only be included if accompanying a meal.

Costs for attendances at conferences may be included, where such attendance will be of direct benefit to the research. Conferences should, as far as possible be individually identified in the proposal and attendance justified. Please note that costs associated with a conference where the date of the conference falls after the end date of the grant, cannot be claimed.

The MRC will also consider requests to meet the costs of travel and living expenses for:

- collaborative working visits on the proposed research
- learning of special techniques

5.1.1.3 Equipment

This heading should be used for any equipment bought or leased for the project which costs £10,000 (inc VAT) or above. MRC will meet the costs of new equipment (including computers and software), the costs of equipment repairs and major spares, the costs of external maintenance agreements and the cost of equipment relocation and installation where required by the proposed research.

Single items of equipment costing less than £10,000 (inc VAT) should be included under the Other Directly Incurred costs heading. Where the call is a capital call, costings over £10k such as refurbishment should also be included as equipment.

All fields must be completed for each entry when making an application and costings should be at current prices with no allowance for inflation.

Applicants are advised that all Research Councils have had extensive cuts in the amounts of Capital they can award. Accordingly applicants are asked to request that their Institution contributes towards the cost of any capital items or equipment over £10,000 (inc VAT). As a guideline MRC's capital allowance has been cut by over 50%, and thus it is expected that the RO will contribute 50% of the cost. Funding Boards/Panels do look at RO contributions and any RO contribution of less then 50% should be fully justified or it may be viewed as the RO being less committed to the PI.

However the overriding consideration remains the quality of the research proposed and the ability of the Institution to contribute will not per se jeopardise the potential success of the application.

Applicants should note that Equipment Quotations are required when making applications to the MRC above the OJEU threshold in force at the time of application.

Items costing between £10,000 (inc VAT) and the RCUK Agreed OJEU Threshholds (currently £111,676, Previously £113,057 excluding VAT) require justification in the Justification of Resources. (Please note the agreed figure is the first figure on the OJEU table and not that stated for 'Other Public Sector Contracting Authorities'. A two page Business Case will be required for each individual item costing in excess of the OJEU threshold. Please see Je-S Help for more information on meeting this cross-council requirement.

The equipment section in the costings should be completed as outlined below:

Heading	Description
Description	Include a brief description of the equipment so that it can be identified as to what is being requested
Country of Manufacture	The country where the item was manufactured
Delivery Date	Please estimate this if not known
Basic Price	Not including VAT
Import duty	Please write 0 in this box if none has been incurred
VAT	This should be marked as 0 when it can be reclaimed by the RO
Total	Total cost (excluding any VAT etc that can be reclaimed)
Amount sought	The total amount requested from MRC. This will normally be 50% of total cost.

Where equipment purchased under a previous MRC grant is to be used in the new project, a share of the continuing maintenance cost attributable to the new work can be sought unless already provided by other grant support.

Equipment purchased by universities and colleges on MRC grants is normally eligible for VAT relief, and VAT should therefore be excluded from proposals.

The host institution should make its own arrangements for applying for exemption from import duty.

Costs to meet externally commissioned surveys (through a procurement/contract with a professional provider) may also be included, providing that the survey is not undertaken by the PI or a CoI.

All equipment must be justified in the Justification of Resources attachment as part of your application.
Please see RCUK Equipment guidance for further information.

Instrument development
Items of equipment for instrument development will be funded at 100% FEC, although MRC reserves the right to request institutional contributions in exceptional circumstances.

A proposal will be classed as instrument development where it is wholly or mainly focussed on creating a novel instrument that will either enable research capability not available using any existing instrument, or will substantially improve research capability beyond what currently exists, in a way that opens up significant new scientific opportunities.

Applicants should note that the guidance applies to individual pieces of equipment. i.e. other equipment requested on the proposal not related to the instrument development will be subject to MRC's rules for equipment.

5.1.1.4 Other Costs
Costs sought should be specified as far as possible in the proposal and justified in terms of requirement for the research proposed:

- Consumables
- Publication Costs – should not be included.
- Recruitment and advertising costs for staff directly employed on the project
- Scanning/surveys

5.1.2 Directly Allocated Costs
It is the responsibility of the RO to have a process in place to monitor the time claimed by any investigator to ensure that no more than 100% FTE (37.5 hours per week) of their time is claimed over all grants on which that individual is named. They should also ensure that Estates Costs for any individual do not exceed 100% FTE across all grants by all Research Councils.

5.1.2.1 Investigators

Principal and Co-investigators should be included under this heading only if their time charged on the grant will be based on estimates, rather than actual costs. Where costs are actual, auditable and verifiable, they should be included under directly incurred costs. Investigator time, not cost must be justified in the Case for Support.

PIs and CoIs whose working time is not fully funded either from other Research Council grants or from another source and are not paid a salary by the research organisation (eg honorary staff), should show their hours attributed to the project, but with zero salary cost request. If a PI or CoI is retired/emeritus, the expectation is that their involvement in the Project would be covered by a contract within the research organisation where the contract includes reimbursement of time, that cost can be costed (up to a maximum equivalent of 37.5 hours a week) on the grant, usually under Directly Incurred staffing costs. Estates and Indirect costs can be requested regardless of whether they are getting a salary/payment or not.

PIs, CoIs and Fellows whose time and salaries have already been wholly (100%) awarded in the FEC of previous research grant proposals or a single separate fellowship provided by the Research Councils must make this clear in the application and request a zero salary.

Salary increments should be taken into account, but possible future pay awards should not be anticipated.

If a PI or CoI is retired, the expectation is that their involvement in a project should be covered by a contract with the RO. If there are costs associated with such time then these should be regarded as Directly Incurred costs.

5.1.2.2 Estates

These costs may include building and premises costs, basic services and utilities and any clerical staff and equipment maintenance or operational costs that have not been included under other cost headings. They will be calculated by the RO and a single figure will be required at time of application. Please note, estates cannot be included for technicians and research support staff.

Estate costs provide a share of the cost of providing the physical infrastructure for research. They will be calculated by each RO using its own cost rates, so will vary between ROs and also between departments within ROs.

Where any named individual will be working away from the RO on long-term secondment for a period in excess of six months during the project, estates costs should not be charged for the period of secondment. No reductions should be made for shorter term absences.

Where the level of staff effort to be awarded is different to that requested, the RO will be required to re-calculate within 10 working days the estates and indirect costs, **using the same costing basis applied to the original application** ie the TRAC rates which were applicable at time of application.

5.1.2.3 Animal Costs: These costs may be shown as either Directly Incurred costs or Directly Allocated. Applications must include a breakdown of animal costs, including weekly maintenance charges, in the Je-S application form in the section 'Resources – Animal Costs'. See the relevant Je-S Help page for more information.

A more detailed justification of the costs incurred should be given in the 'Justification of Resources' attachment. This should detail the total number of animals requested, and justify the resources requested for purchase, breeding, maintaining and using the chosen number of animals. No experimental or statistical details should be included in this section (see section 8.2 'Use of Animals'), however a breeding plan may be included to demonstrate how the total number of animals requested was determined. If animals are to be obtained from sources outside of the UK, full justification must be given and import costs detailed.

In some cases, adherence to the principles defined In Section 8.2 will require additional resources e.g. for identification of animals (e.g. by microchip), increased maintenance charges resulting from randomisation procedures, or salary costs associated with obtaining statistical support. MRC recognises this and will support such costs where fully justified in the appropriate sections.

5.1.2.4 Other Directly Allocated Costs

These comprise all other direct costs calculated on the basis of estimates. Items that can be included within this heading are:

- Research and technical staff whose time is shared across several projects (such as pooled technicians) and no audit record of time is required only an estimate
- Charge out costs for use of major facilities
- Charge out costs for use of existing equipment
- Charge out costs for departmental technical and administrative services

Please note that contributions from project co-funders should not be entered here. They should be detailed in the 'Project Co-funders' section.

5.1.3 Indirect Costs

These should include the costs of administration such as personnel, finance, library and some departmental services.

Like estates, indirect costs will be calculated by the RO and a single figure is required for the application. Information about the derivation or justification of indirect costs is not required. Please note, indirect costs cannot be claimed for technicians or research support staff.

It is the responsibility of the RO to have a process in place to monitor the time claimed by any investigator to ensure than no more than 100% of FTE is claimed as indirect costs for any individual across all grants funded by all Research Councils.

They will largely be based on the research staff effort assigned to the project. The MRC and peer reviewers will not scrutinise them and will in general accept the values charged by the RO. They will need to be re-calculated by the RO if there are changes in the amount of Investigator and/or other research effort awarded.

Where a MRC Unit/Institute is the lead applicant, any award will be made on the basis of 100% Directly Incurred costs only and will not include indirect or estates costs.

5.1.3.1 Overseas Staff

Investigators or Project Partners at overseas organisations are generally not eligible to apply for or receive Indirect and/or Estates costs.

However, applicants requiring overseas staff who are locally employed in a developing country, should seek guidance from the MRC Programme Manager in advance of submitting the application. MRC may contribute to Estates and Indirect Costs at its discretion.

Indirect and Estates costs associated with overseas locally employed staff should be included as Exceptions.

Although the MRC will not question the indirect costs and estates costs rates declared by ROs, the full cost of the proposed research (including Indirect costs and Estates costs) will be taken into account in any assessment of its value for money.

Please see the relevant Je-S Help page for further details.

5.1.4 Exceptions

Applicants should discuss any exceptional cost such as the costs incurred by overseas CoIs with the relevant Programme Manager (PM) in the first instance, telling the PM the cost and why it is essential to the success of the proposal. This will be a factor in the peer review process and the PM will be able to advise on whether a cost would be considered reasonable. Applications submitted to any of the International Calls or Jointly-funded global initiative are not required to do this as the vast majority of costs are likely to be exceptions.

Applicants must also include in the Proposal Cover Letter, (to be uploaded as an attachment in their Je-S application), the name of the PM with whom they have discussed the proposed Exceptional cost and briefly provide any further justification.

Applicants should consult with the relevant PM about the scientific justification of their Exceptional cost and in the case of overseas CoIs, be able to demonstrate that required expertise was not available in the UK. The ultimate decision will be made by the board or panel. Specific questions about MRC policy should be directed to: RFPD@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

5.1.5 Overseas Costs

The costs for work undertaken at an overseas organisation are admissible and should be discussed with the Programme Manager before submission of the application. This excludes MRC overseas Units who should follow the guidance in section 5.2

The following summarises which costs are admissible and at what rate the MRC will pay these costs:

	Description	Discuss with PM in advance	MRC FEC Contribution
1	Costs for overseas CoIs and any locally employed staff e.g. % of actual salary, travel and expenses must be entered as Exceptions.	Yes	100%
2	Costs charged by the overseas organisation and associated with the research e.g. consumables, field work etc., must be entered as Exceptions.	Yes	100%
3	A contribution towards Indirect and Estates costs at the overseas organisation where the research is being undertaken in a developing country is permissible where it can be shown that it will assist in developing research capacity (calculated as 20% of the overseas organisations Directly Incurred costs).	Yes	100%
4	The costs of any service or product procured (for use in the UK) from an overseas supplier (e.g. mouse, antibody strains, cells lines, assays etc).	No	80%
5	Travel and Subsistence (including bench fees) for UK based researchers going abroad to undertake work. This does not include costs incurred directly by the overseas organisation when the researcher is active in that country.	No	80%

Overseas costs may not include:

1. Overheads (Estate or Indirect costs) for an overseas CoI, or any locally employed staff in a developed country.
2. Overseas Project Partners costs – this may apply, for example, where a project partner provides guidance/advice in return for receipt of research benefit but where intellectual input is not sufficient for CoI status.

5.1.6 Industrial Partner Costs

The level of contribution expected from the Industrial Partner depends on the Intellectual Property arrangements between the Academic and Industrial Partners. Please refer to MICAs for further information including what can be included under Industrial Partner Costs. Where IP arrangements have been pre-negotiated, the industrial partner is expected to contribute a minimum of 25% for basic research or 50% for applied research of the total project costs (ie total cost of project industry costs and academic costs).

Full details should be entered in section 4 of the MICA form and the sum entered as DI Other on the Je-S form. Please note however that the general rule is that only the costs of the academic partner will be met if the grant is funded. This will be funded at the normal scheme FEC rate (usually 80%).

5.1.7 NHS Costs

Applications may be made for research costs associated with NHS studies. Costs included in these applications comprise of:

- Research Costs
- NHS Treatment Costs
- NHS Support Costs

Research Costs of a study. **The MRC will only fund costs which fall under this heading.** These are funded at the appropriate FEC rate (usually 80%). The research award does NOT include NHS Support and/or Treatment Costs, although the MRC will take NHS Support and Treatment costs into account when considering the value for money of the research.

Where a research study takes place in or involves the NHS, Department of Health guidance on the responsibilities for meeting patient care costs associated with research and development in the NHS applies. (See link below.)

NHS Support Costs: These are the additional patient care costs associated with the research, which would end once the R&D activity in question has stopped, even if the patient care service involved continues to be provided. These might cover items such as extra patient tests, extra in-patient days and extra nursing attention. Researchers should contact their local NHS R&D Department initially. If they are unable to help directly or if there is no local NHS R&D Department, contact the local Comprehensive Local Research Network (CLRN) Senior Manager. CLRN contacts are available at CLRN Contacts.

NHS Treatment Costs: These are the patient care costs that would continue to be incurred if the patient care service in question continued to be provided after the R&D activity has stopped. In determining NHS Treatment costs the applicant must assume that the patient care service being assessed will continue even though there may be no plans for it to do so. Where patient care is being provided which differs from the normal, standard treatment for that condition (either an experimental treatment or a service in a different location from where it would normally be given), the difference between the total Treatment Costs and the costs of the 'usual standard care' (if any) constitutes Excess Treatment Cost/Saving, but is nonetheless part of the Treatment Cost, not an NHS Support or Research Cost. These costs should be determined in conjunction with your NHS trust partner(s) and their commissioners.

For further information, please see:
- Responsibility for meeting patient care costs
- Attributing revenue costs of externally funded non-commercial research in the NHS (ARCO)
- EL(97)77: Meeting patient care costs associated with research and development in the NHS detailed guidance

Additional advice and guidance can be obtained from your local Trust's Research and Development Office or from the Department of Health Research and Development Finance team.
Web site: http://www.info.doh.gov.uk/contactus.nsf/memo?openform

For research based in Scotland, advice can be sought from the Chief Scientist's Office. For advice on NHS funding and policy, research ethics, IP, information and communication, please contact.

Contact: Chief Scientist's Office
Telephone: 0131 244 2246

For Wales, please refer to NHS Research and Development in Wales

For Northern Ireland, please refer top the following NHS Research and Development in Northern Ireland

If applying for NHS support costs or treatment costs, applicants should complete an NHS Costs Pro form, save it as a pdf and attach this to their application as a Letter of Support. This should be attached to the application as a 'letter of support' and "NHS Support and Treatment Costs" entered in the 'description' field.

A 'Letter of Support' must also be included with the application from the lead NHS provider acknowledging the amount requested and confirming that these are the likely costs.

5.1.8 Costs related to specific calls

BMC: DPFS/DCS and BMC, RMRC Grants only: For the 2 schemes supporting clinical evaluation, certain costs in excess of £50k for sub-contracts with Contract ROs (CROs) may be paid at 100%. This is limited to activities that meet ALL three of the criteria outlined below:

- Are required to be undertaken to regulatory standards by a competent authority to allow clinical evaluation **AND**
- Do not involve creativity/intellectual input to the development of the entity by the CRO **AND**
- Require access to skills and resources not available in academia, where this can be robustly justified.

Examples of eligible activities:
- Pre-clinical toxicology package carried out under Good Laboratory Practice (GLP)
- Synthesis/ manufacture of an entity carried out under Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP)

Examples of typically ineligible activities:
- Testing an intervention for efficacy in animal models
- Iterative development of an intervention (e.g. medicinal chemistry)
- Preparation of regulatory submission

If an applicant is considering applying for 100% FEC for such activities they must discuss with the relevant scheme Programme Manager before submitting. The Programme Manager will advise on suitability and the mechanism for inclusion of the Exceptional costs. **Note that the first £50k of aggregated eligible CRO costs should be included under the "Directly Incurred" heading. The remaining balance should be entered separately as "Directly Incurred", then the "Exceptions" box must be ticked.**

5.1.9 Open Access Publishing

Researchers need to comply with the MRC's policy on Open Access.

Please note – Applicants should NOT include any costings for Access Publishing charges (APCs) or other types of publication in respect of peer reviewed research articles (including review articles not commissioned by publishers) and conference proceedings that acknowledge funding from the MRC.

The charges for APCs and other publication charges for all research papers resulting from work funded by the MRC (or one of the other Research Councils) that relate to grants with a start date of 1 April 2013 or beyond are supported through block grants to UK Higher Education Institutions, approved Independent Research Organisations and Research Council Institutes. A RO can then access these funds to pay for APCs for any article resulting from Research Council funding.

The Open Access Policy will be reviewed by RCUK in 2014.

5.2 Costing of applications from (or including) MRC Units and Institutes (NOT University Units)

5.2.1 Where the MRC Unit/Institute is a lead applicant

MRC units can only apply as lead applicants to Managed Mode Calls, but can be a Co-Applicant on both Managed Mode and Responsive Mode Calls.

All applications must be costed on the basis of 100% FEC. Applicants must discuss and agree the costs of the proposed research with their Unit/Institute Senior Finance Manager. This should take place at an early stage of the application process before submission.

Where eligible MRC Units/Institutes are applying for a grant as a lead organisation, the applicant must complete and submit an application via Je-S. If successful, only the Directly Incurred costs will be payable and these should therefore be costed in the application form. However, in order for the application to be assessed objectively in the context of all applications, costs other than DI which are already covered by the MRC Unit/Institute/University Unit Award; Directly allocated, Estates and Indirect Costs including salaries for MRC staff, should be entered as Zero on the application form but MUST be fully declared in the Justification of Resources attachment. The following qualifications to the standard guidance apply to MRC Units/Institutes applying for a grant:

Directly Incurred costs
Directly Incurred costs can be included where these exceed the MRC's Units/Institutes baseline complement of posts when undertaking work directly related to the research proposed. All Directly Incurred posts must be justified in the Justification for Resources.

If the application involves costs incurred by a RO on behalf of the research project these will be met by MRC and paid to the MRC Unit/Institute (as the lead applicant) who will then be responsible for reimbursing the RO. These will form part of the direct costs of the application (ie a direct cost to the MRC Unit/Institute) – please therefore include these costs within the Directly Incurred sections of the application.

Any CoIs from UK ROs should be fully costed on the application form, but will be paid at 80% FEC (salary, Estates and Indirect Costs).

All costs must be justified in the Justification of Resources section of the application.

The nature of the relationship with, and negotiations between the MRC and any other non-MRC ROs must be managed and agreed via the MRC Unit's/Institute's Senior Financial Manager. This should take place at an early stage of the application process and before submission.

If successful, all the costs included in the application will be paid in full as Directly Incurred.

Directly Allocated Costs
PI and CoI (where employed by the MRC) time must be included in the application and the costs associated with the PI/CoI and all other MRC employed staff (eg shared/pool staff that support a range of facilities and projects) associated with the proposed research will be captured under the Directly Allocated heading.

These costs will NOT be paid but are required for comparative purposes.

Estates and Indirect Costs
An application from an MRC Unit/Institute should list these costs separately in line with MRC FEC methodology. These costs will NOT be paid but are required for comparative purposes.

Award Management between the MRC Unit/Institute and Co-Applicants
The MRC Unit/Institute and the RO(s) on the grant are responsible for negotiating and agreeing the level of funds and method of transfer to be made by the MRC Unit/Institute and for ensuring that the Directly Incurred costs are auditable through timesheets, invoices etc.

5.2.2 Where the MRC Institute/Unit is applying as a lead applicant for a non-MRC Research Council Grant
The MRC Unit/Institute can apply as either a lead applicant or a Co-Applicant in the same way as any other RO. The application must be costed using FEC principles in the normal way. If successful, they will be awarded 80% of the total FEC costs (ie Directly Incurred, Directly Allocated, Estates, Indirect costs will all be awarded).

5.2.3 MRC Unit/Institute Costs on a (non-MRC) RO-led application
Where participating in a RO-led application as a Co-Applicant, the MRC Unit/Institute must provide costing to the lead RO calculated on the basis of 100% FEC (and included in the application within the Directly Incurred, Directly Allocated, Estates and Indirect Costs sections of the application as applicable).

If successful, the lead (non-MRC) applicant will be funded at 80% FEC and the MRC Unit/Institute will have 100% of their Directly Incurred Costs funded in the same way as if the MRC Unit/Institute were applying as the lead applicant. This will be paid to the lead applicant who will transfer the payment (in full) to the MRC Unit/Institute.

5.2.4 External Scientific Staff (ESS)
ESS refers to PIs and other scientific staff, paid via MRC payroll, but located outside of any MRC Unit/Institute. Where they are included on a proposal, please put zero salary on the proposal form, but include their costs in the Justification of Resources. Estates and Indirect costs can be included at the normal rate for the research organisation. Please ensure the ESS box is ticked.

5.3 University Units

University Units cannot apply for programme grants, but can apply for all other grants as either a lead or a co-applicant. They should apply as a department of the university, but will not be funded for anything already funded by the MRC. Therefore anyone already employed by the Unit cannot have salary or Estates and Indirect costs. New staff can have salaries and Estates and Indirect costs. Equipment should only be included if it is core to the research and should normally be paid at 50%. All other costs would be funded at the FEC rate for the call applied for (normally 80%).

5.4 Support from other Sources

5.4.1 Support on current projects

Applicants will often be already holding grants from the MRC and other funding bodies for research related to the topic for which new funds are being sought. Applicants MUST declare on their Proposal Form in the section 'Other Support' any RELEVANT financial support which has been awarded or applied for.

Other Support

Details of support sought or received from any other source for this or other research in this field

Awarding Organisation	Awarding Organisation's reference	Title of Project	Decision Mode (Y/N)	Award made (Y/N)	Start Date	End Date	Amount Sought/ awarded (£)

5.4.2 Project Co-Funders

A project Co-funder is an organisation which is jointly funding a project with the MRC. The relationship can be directly with the MRC or the RO. This could include charities, industrial or commercial companies and government organisations. The terms of the co-funding should be detailed in a Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding.

Where the MRC is involved directly with a co-funder, the co-funder will be named in the guidance for the MRC call for proposals and the applicant should state if there is any potential conflict of interest. This should be included in the covering letter and be discussed with the Programme Manager before application.

5.4.3 Project Joint-funders

A joint funder is another Research Council that is jointly funding the grant with MRC.

The MRC may enter into a jointly-funded call with another Research Council where the area of science falls across both remits. In this instance, the specific guidance for the call will clearly state to which Research Council the applicant should apply.

Where the proposal potentially falls within the remit of more than one Research Council, the applicant must contact the MRC Programme Manager to seek further advice.

When an application is received by the MRC which falls within both the remit of the MRC and the remit of another Research Council, the MRC may enter into an arrangement with the other Research Council to jointly fund the project should it be awarded.

6. Deadline dates for Submission of Proposals

Applications must be submitted via Je-S by 4pm on the deadline date for the relevant board or panel. All applications have to be submitted via the RO's administrative department. Please ensure that sufficient time is allowed for them to complete their parts of the application and make the submission before the MRC deadline date.

Applicants will have a set window (usually eight weeks) during which applications can be entered, viewed and submitted within the Je-S system. As a result, any applications or amendments must be completed and submitted within this timeframe. Programme Managers will not be able to offer discretionary extensions to any applicant.

In practice, we would strongly advise applicants to prepare responses to the headings found within Je-S, in an 'off-line' environment. It may be possible to see the required headings for applicants' documents by creating an application to the relevant 'Scheme' (where available), leaving the Call selection blank (see Figure 1 below).

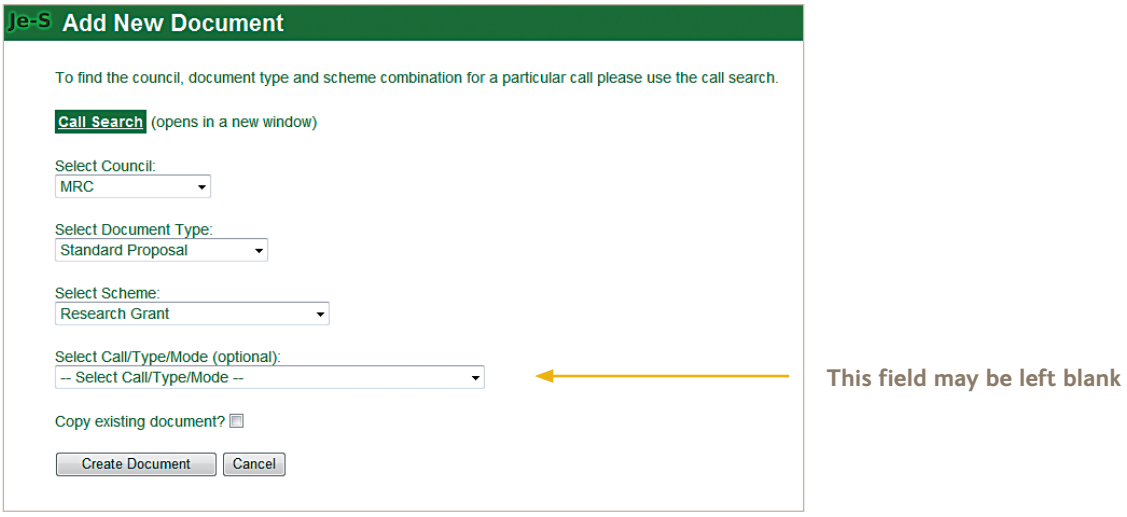


Figure 1: Creating an application without specifying a 'Call'

Some changes may be made to the document at this stage, though some fields may be locked until a specific Call is set. Once a Call becomes available for applications in Je-S, it is possible to configure an application to this call by selecting it from a drop-down menu on the 'Project Details' page of your application (see Figure 2 below). It is necessary to specify a call before a document can be submitted.

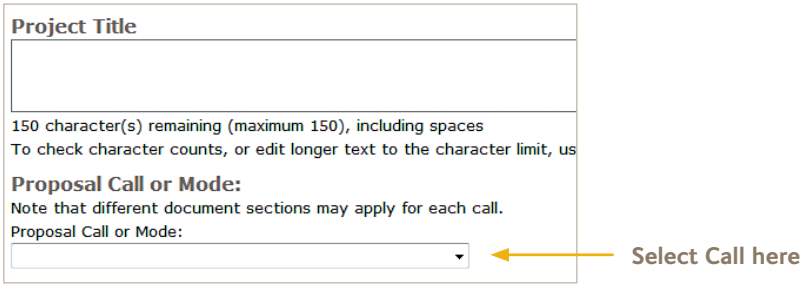


Figure 2: Configuring 'Call' in an existing document

7. The Peer Review Process

7.1 Peer Reviewing applications

When the application is received, it will be sent out to be peer reviewed by scientific experts in the field of science incorporated in the application. These experts will score the proposal and provide a review. The reviewer's comments will be used at Triage to decide which of the proposals will be taken forward to the Board or Panel decision meeting.

7.2 Nominating Peer Reviewers

The applicant(s) can nominate up to 3 independent reviewers whom MRC may approach for assessment of the research proposal.

- Nominated reviewers must be experts in the research field and/or be able to provide an expert view on the value and benefits of the research proposal to users.
- Investigators shall not provide reviewers from their own organisation, or from current or proposed project co-funders, or where any possible conflict of interest may arise.
- International reviewers can be included.

7.3 How to nominate peer reviewers on Je-S

- Click on the Reviewers tab on the left hand side of the screen
- Click on Add New Reviewers
- Search for the name
- If you locate the person, then
  - Click on PID (personal identifier for the person) to select
  - Then save
- If you cannot locate the person, then
  - Click on Add New Person
  - Complete the details on the form provided
  - Then Save

7.4 PI response to Peer Reviewers Comments

Most of the calls allow for PIs to respond to peer reviewer's comments.

The response should be clearly presented and concise; with a minimum font size of 11point Arial using an A4 format and would normally not exceed 3 pages. Should the applicant feel that 3 pages are not enough, they should contact the Programme Manager for further guidance.

The response is to ALL reviews received. A subsequent response to any late reviews must also retain response text on all earlier reviews and not exceed the specified page format. If the response needs to be amended eg because of further later peer review comments, the existing copy will need to be removed and a new version uploaded.

8. Special considerations

Some applications will involve research that requires special consideration of particular issues. These are detailed below.

8.1 Clinical Staff

It is important that any clinically-trained individuals who intend to be employed through the grant to undertake research, and who remain interested in pursuing clinical careers discuss their plans with their Postgraduate Medical Dean, or equivalent, to ensure that where appropriate, one year of MRC-funded research counts towards the Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training.

8.2 Use of Animals

The elaboration of a compelling scientific case is an essential prerequisite for justifying the use of animals. Over the past few years there have been a number of important initiatives that have been aimed at raising the sometimes inadequate standard of reporting of animal experiments in the scientific literature. The NC3Rs' ARRIVE guidelines, for example, lay out criteria that should be met in reporting animal studies in order that their results and conclusions can be properly evaluated by readers. These criteria address a range of issues relating to transparency and validity of experimental design, the avoidance or minimisation of bias and the adequacy of statistical aspects of the study including statistical power and appropriate statistical analysis.

In light of these initiatives RCUK has revised and updated its guidelines on what information needs to be provided to allow proper evaluation of the scientific strengths and weaknesses of applications for funding involving animal use. In some cases, adherence to the principles defined in this section will require additional resources e.g. for animal Identification such as 'microchipping', increased maintenance charges resulting from the randomisation procedure, or salary costs associated with obtaining statistical support. MRC recognises this and will support such costs where fully justified in the appropriate sections.

8.2.1 Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of Animal Experiments

Applicants are expected to have developed their proposals in accordance with the crossfunder guidance for the use of animals in research Responsibi!itv jn the Use of Animals in Bioscience Research and NC3Rs Guidelines: Primate Accommodation. Care and Use.

Experiments using animals funded by the MRC must comply with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA), amended 2012 and any further embodiments, in:

- using the simplest possible, or least sentient, species of animal appropriate;
- ensuring that distress and pain are avoided wherever possible;
- employing an appropriate design and using the minimum number of animals consistent with ensuring that scientific objectives will be met.

Advice on opportunities and techniques for implementing these principles can be found on the NC3Rs website: www.nc3rs.org.uk

8.2.2 Proposals Involving Animal Use

Researchers are strongly advised to read the following section carefully before preparing a proposal to ensure all the relevant information required is included in the appropriate sections of their application. In particular, applicants should ensure their proposal clearly sets out and justifies the following:

- research objectives and how the knowledge generated will advance the field;
- the need to use animals and lack of realistic alternatives;
- choice of species of animals to be used;
- type of animal(s), for example, strain, pathogen free, genetically modified or mutant;
- planned experimental design and its justification;
- numbers of animals and frequency of measurements/interventions to be used;
- primary outcomes to be assessed;
- planned statistical analyses.

8.2.3 Experimental design, avoidance of bias and statistical considerations

There is a wide range of designs and approaches to animal experimentation that are appropriate depending on the objectives of the research proposal. In all cases, the MRC expects that researchers provide well justified information in their applications concerning the experimental design and its suitability to answering the research questions posed.

While MRC recognises that there are ethical imperatives to reduce the number of animals used, it is also unethical to conduct a study that because of its limited size has inadequate statistical power to robustly answer a research question. Applicants should therefore provide adequate justification for their choice of design and numbers of animals and interventions. It is important that adequate information is given concerning methodological issues including (but not restricted to) the following:

- the avoidance of bias (for example blinding of observers assessing outcomes to the group allocation in a randomised design);
- how randomisation will be carried out (if used) or why it is not appropriate if it will not be used;
- a clear definition of the experimental unit in the analysis and the implications thereof (that is, there is a difference between N samples from one animal, as distinct from one sample from each of N animals, or combining samples from multiple animals);
- a principled justification of the adequacy of the numbers of animals to be included so as to be able to minimise the likelihood of spurious results due to the play of chance alone;
- where animals are used in multiple types of experimental approach within a single application (e.g. for tissue supply, pilot experiments or more defined preclinical studies), exemplars for these types of experiment should be provided;
- the number of different time points at which measurements will be made on each animal;
- a description of the statistical analysis methods that will be used, explaining how they relate to the experimental design and showing that they are appropriate for the types of data that will be collected;
- an indication of the number of independent replications of each experiment to be performed with the objective of minimising the likelihood of spurious nonreplicable results. If there are no plans for studies to be independently replicated within the current proposal then this will need to be justified.

8.2.4 Peer Review

Guidance on where in the proposal each of the aspects should be addressed is given below and summarised the table on page 42.

This information must be provided for all proposals involving animals, regardless of whether or not the animal costs are requested as part of the proposal. Applicants should note that the sections below will be subject to equally careful scrutiny, and will carry substantial weight when assessing the scientific strength of the proposal.

8.2.4.1 Je-S section on 'Animal Research'

Within the 'Animal Research' section Researchers must give details of any procedures categorised as moderate or severe in order that the assessment of the proposal can balance the importance of the potential scientific advancement to the welfare of the animals.

8.2.4.2 Je-S section on 'Animal Species'

This section must be completed for all proposals involving animal use, irrespective of whether funding for the animals is requested as part of the proposal.

Under 'Supporting Information' sound scientific reasons for the use of animals and an explanation of why there are no realistic alternatives must be given, with an explanation of how the choice of species complies with ASPA (see section 8.2.1).

The experimental design should be outlined, including a justification of the total numbers of animals to be used and, where appropriate, the frequency of measurements/interventions required on each animal. Planned procedures to minimise experimental bias (for example, randomisation protocols, blinding) should be outlined or an explanation included as to why such procedures are not appropriate. Each experiment does not need to be described in detail, but sufficient information must be included that reviewers are readily able to understand the experimental plan. The scientific rationale for the experimental design should be explained in the Case for Support (see section 8.2.4.4).

Researchers must provide a properly constructed justification of how the numbers of animals to be used were determined. In general it would be expected that professional statistical advice will be sought in putting this section together.

In many instances this section will include statistical power calculations based on justifiable and explicit assumptions about the anticipated size of the experimental effects. If statistical power calculations[2] are not given, applicants should provide a principled explanation of the choice of numbers. In general, explanations based solely in terms of 'usual practice' will not be considered adequate. An overview of the planned statistical analyses and their relation to the choice of sample size should be included.

8.2.4.3 Proposal attachment 'Case for Support'

The scientific case underpinning the choice of animal model and the experimental plans should be detailed in the Case for Support.

An explanation should be provided of how and why the animal species and model being used can address the scientific objectives and the relevance to human biology. For knockout or transgenic lines this should include information on the sources these may be obtained from and relevant information to demonstrate the verification of lines selected.

It is essential that the case is clearly made as to how the chosen design (with reference to the information regarding the numbers of animals and planned statistical analyses provided in the Animal Species section of the form, see section 8.2.4.2 above) will enable the stated objectives of the study to be achieved. In addition to the usual background and specification of the primary and secondary objectives of the study, or specific hypotheses being tested, the primary and secondary experimental outcomes to be assessed should be clearly defined (e.g. cell death, molecular markers, behavioural changes). Each experiment does not need to be described in detail, but sufficient information must be included that reviewers are readily able to understand the design rationale and make robust judgements on the scientific case.

8.2.4.4 Je-S section on 'Resources – Animal costs'

The costs of both the animals themselves and their maintenance may be requested and should be listed in the 'Resources – Animal Costs' section of the Je-S form. See section 5.1.2.3 of this handbook for additional information. Where experiments involve genetically altered animals, examples of the breeding strategies may be included in the Justification of Resources section to support total number of animals requested.

Applicants contemplating the use of animals purchased from commercial suppliers should, wherever possible, use UK suppliers, to minimise the risk of suffering during transport. For cats, dogs and primates, Home Office-approved suppliers must be used.

Applicants planning research using rhesus macaques should obtain animals from the Centre for Macaques.

2 Power calculations can be used to calculate the minimum sample size required so that one can be reasonably likely to detect an effect of a given size, or to calculate the minimum effect size that Is likely to be detected in a study using a given sample size

8.2.4.5 Proposal attachment 'Justification of Resources

A detailed justification of the costs incurred should be given in the Justification of Resources attachment (see section 4.2.3 for further information). This should detail the animal costs requested, and may outline breeding programmes if appropriate to support the number of animals required. No experimental or statistical details should be included in this section; these details must be included in the 'Animal Species' section of the Je-S form and Case for Support.

8.2.5 Ethical and welfare standards and review

Applicants must ensure that best practice in relation to animal husbandry and welfare is followed. Where the work proposed is not covered by an existing Project Licence under ASPA, applicants should put their proposals to the local Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body for review prior to submission and ensure that ethical and welfare issues raised are addressed. Applicants should be aware that the NC3Rs will be involved in the review of any MRC applications proposing to use non-human primates, cats, dogs or equines, providing advice specifically on the 3Rs and animal welfare.

If applicants are proposing to undertake any animal experiments as part of collaborative programmes outside the UK, these experiments must be conducted in a way that conforms to the legal, ethical and normal practices in that country, as well as conforming to the standards (including animal welfare) required in the UK. Where standards are different, the more rigorous guidelines will apply.

8.2.6 Home Office Licences

It is the responsibility of all applicants to ensure that the appropriate Home Office licences are obtained. This will include the requirement that the research proposals are approved by the local ethical review process.

Home Office licences (or amendments to existing licences) do not have to be obtained before the application is submitted to the MRC, but if a grant is awarded, researchers must have the necessary licences in place before any animal experimentation begins.

8.2.7 Mouse Strains

The MRC encourages the archiving and sharing of genetically altered mouse strains as a means of both reducing and refining animal use[3]. The MRC supports a central repository of mouse strains, the MRC Mouse Frozen Embryo and Sperm Archive (FESA) at MRC Harwell. FESA aims to ensure that valuable mouse strains are safeguarded, that the need to maintain colonies of live mice for long periods of time is reduced, and that the significant investment in engineering strains is capitalised upon fully.

Where there may be a need for the repeated creation of pre-existing genetically modified mouse strains, this must be fully justified. Applicants planning to produce genetically modified mouse strain(s) should investigate whether suitable strains are available via FESA or elsewhere before requesting resources for creating new strains.

Applicants planning on creating new genetically altered mouse strains as part of their work should actively consider archiving and sharing these strains via FESA. When archiving and sharing of genetically modified mice is not possible please clearly state in your application the reasons for this.

Contact: FESA
Email: fesa@har.mrc.ac.uk

3 See 'Sharing and archiving of genetically altered mice: Opportunities for reduction and refinement'.

8.2.8 Justification of Animal Use

Where a proposal involves multiple experiments[4] the level of detail shown below should be included for each type of experiment.

Information	Details	Location and Guidance Section
Procedure Severity	Confirmation of the use of animals (this should be ticked as yes even if the animal costs are not requested as part of the proposal) and details of any procedures categorised as moderate or severe.	Animal Research section of the Je-S form (Section 8.2.4.1)
The need to use animals and the choice of species	A sound scientific reason for the use of animals and an explanation why there are no realistic non-animal alternatives. An explanation of how the choice of species complies with ASPA.	Animal Species section of the Je-S form under 'Supporting Information' for each species (Sections 8.2.1 and 8.2.4.2)
Experimental approach	The number of experimental and control groups, the total number of animals used in each experiment and the number of animals in each experimental group, and the number of times each animal will be measured; the number of independent replications of each experiment indicated; any steps taken to minimise the effects of bias when allocating animals to treatment (e.g. randomization procedure) and when assessing results (e.g. blinding).	
Sample size	An explanation of how the number of animals was arrived at, including power calculations if appropriate or other supporting information to demonstrate that the findings will be robust. Details of any statistical advice sought/available.	
Planned statistical analyses	An overview of the planned statistical analyses in relation to the choice of sample size, along with details of any statistical advice available.	
Objectives and experimental outcomes	The primary and any secondary objectives of the study, or specific hypotheses being tested. The primary and secondary experimental outcomes to be assessed (e.g. cell death, molecular markers behavioural changes).	Case for Support attachment (Sections 4.2.2 and 8.2.4.3)
Justification of the choice of species/model	An explanation of how and why the animal species and model being used can address the scientific objectives and the relevance to human biology. Relevant information about the animals to be used (e.g. species, strain, sex, developmental stage, weight).	
Justification of the experimental design and statistical framework	A scientific justification of why the numbers of animals to be used, the experimental design chosen, and planned statistical analyses are appropriate to enable the objectives of the study to be met.	
Funding requested	The total number of animals requested and the associated purchase and upkeep costs listed.	Animal Costs section of the Je-S form (Sections 5.1.2.3 and 8.2.4.4)
Explanation of funding requested	Overview of how the figure for funding requested was reached. No experimental or statistical details should be included in this section, however a breeding plan may be included to demonstrate how the total number of animals requested was determined	

4 For example; pilot study, tissue supply, treatment comparison.

8.3 Human Participants in Research

8.3.1 Regulations and Guidance

The MRC expects all work involving human participants to be undertaken in accordance with its policies and guidance. These include:

- Research regulation and ethics – MRC position (2005);
- Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice in Clinical Trials (1998);
- Good Research Practice (2000);
- Human Tissue and Biological Samples for Use in Medical Research (2001) and new addendum (2005) following the passage of the Human Tissue Act;
- Human material derived from the nervous system (2003);
- Medical Research Involving Children (2004);
- Medical research involving adults who cannot consent (2007);
- Personal Information in Medical Research (2000);
- Policy on antiretroviral therapy (ART) (2003);
- Research Involving Human Participants in Developing Societies (2004).

All these publications can be accessed on our website, publications.

The MRC Regulatory Support Centre (RSC) provides support and guidance for those conducting research with human participants, their tissues or data. For further details please see the MRC RSC website.

Enough information should be included in each proposal to enable the MRC to evaluate any physical or psychological hazard to which participants may be exposed. Each proposal should specify the number, sex, age range and state of health of the human participants. Applicants will also need to indicate how informed consent will be obtained and whether the participants are, for example, hospital patients, medical students or volunteers.

Payments to healthy volunteers participating in research are allowable, provided that the payment is for expense, time and inconvenience and is not at a level that would constitute an inducement for people to take part in studies. Independent ethics committee approval is required for research that involves human participants (whether patients or healthy volunteers); their data and/or tissues.

There may be cases where this review must be made by and NHS Research Ethics Committee (NHS REC). For further guidance on when NHS REC approval is required please see "Does my project require review by a Research Ethics Committee?" Proportionate review is also available for studies which present minimal risk or burden to participants. For more on this 14 day review please see the NRES website.

If the study is testing the safety or efficacy of a medicinal product, it is likely that this will fall under the scope of the UK Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004, regulated by Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). More information on the types of studies that fall under these Regulations and practical help on implementing the requirements (including the requirements of a Clinical Trial Authorisation (CTA) application) can be found on the Clinical Trials Took Kit. Guidance on risk-proportionate approaches to the management and monitoring of clinical trials is provided in the MRC/DH/MHRA Joint Project document (see Appendix 2). For details of the risk-adapted approach to Clinical Trial Authorisations, please see Submitting a Notification for a trial on the MHRA website.

For investigations that involve NHS patients, their data, tissues or NHS resources; NHS R&D management permission is required from all relevant NHS organisations for research. For further guidance please the MRC Data and Tissues Tool Kit – R&D Management Permissions.

If the investigation is to take place within an organisation such as a factory, school or service establishment, applicants may be asked to provide evidence of relevant approval(s) from the appropriate authorities.

Approval(s) for the research detailed in an MRC grant proposal must be granted by the appropriate bodies before any work can commence. Institutions, applicants and grant holders have absolute responsibility for ensuring that the necessary approvals are granted for the research considered by the MRC and that no research requiring approvals is initiated until they are in place.

The MRC reserves the right to refuse to make an award on ethical grounds alone, even if the agreement of an independent ethics committee has been obtained.

Applicants must ensure that the appropriate approval(s) are in place before an award letter can be issued by the MRC.

8.3.2 Use of Human Tissue

Applicants whose proposed research involves the use of human tissue and/or use of human tissue to treat patients as specified in the relevant legislation[5] must confirm in their proposal that they will comply with the appropriate legislation and follow the relevant Codes of Practice issued by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA). For further guidance please see the MRC Data and Tissues Tool Kit – Should Consent be sought? and HTA licence.

Applicants whose proposed research involves the use of human fetal tissue, or non-fetal products of conception (i.e. amniotic fluids, umbilical cord, placenta or membranes) should follow the guidance set out in relevant Codes of Practice issued by the HTA (in particular see paragraphs 157-161 in the Code of Practice on Consent).

Research involving gametes and embryos is subject to regulation by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) and researchers must ensure that they adhere to the relevant guidance. For further details please see the MRC Data and Tissues Tool Kit – HFEA licence.

Cell lines and embryonic stem cell lines fall within the regulatory remit of the HTA by virtue of the Human Tissue (Quality and Safety for Human Application) Regulations 2007, which regulates the processing, storage and distribution of stem cell lines for human application. Both the HFEA and the MHRA also have a regulatory remit in respect of cell lines and embryonic stem cell lines. A position statement on regulating human embryonic stem cell lines has been issued by the HTA, HFEA and MHRA which provides guidance on the relevant regulatory remits. More information on the regulatory routes for conducting human stem cell research in the UK can be found on the UK Stem Cell Tool Kit.

If human tissue is being supplied by a third party, a letter of support from the third party must be attached to the application.

8.3.3 Xenotransplantation

Applicants contemplating xenotransplantation in research must be aware of the relevant Home Office legislation; Xenotransplantation guidance from the Department of Health (DH) and the regulation of Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products (ATMPs).

Applicants must therefore seek relevant approval(s) and confirm in their proposal that they will follow the DH Hguidance and if applicable comply with the ATMP regulations. For further guidance please see the MRC Experimental Medicine Tool Kit – Xenotransplantation.

8.3.4 Use of Radioactive Medicinal Products in Humans

Applicants, whose proposed research requires the administration of radioactive medicinal products (including in vivo neutron activation analysis in humans), should follow the guidance issued by the Administration of Radioactive Substances Advisory Committee (ARSAC) and seek the relevant approval(s) as appropriate. Please note that ARSAC is currently moving to a more integrated process with the Health Research Authority (HRA) that will remove the requirement for additional 'research certificate' applications. For further details please see the HRA website.

8.3.5 Genetic modification

The Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations 2000 (GMO (CU)) as amended by the Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) (Amendment) Regulations in 2002, 2005 and 2010 require laboratories that intend carrying out genetic modification to assess the risks of all activities and make sure that any necessary controls are put in place. Further information about the legislation and relevant approval(s) required is available on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website.

4 Human Tissue Act 2004 (HT Act); Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006; Human Tissue (Quality and Safety for Human Application) Regulations 2007 (Q&S Regulations).

8.4 Dangerous Pathogens

Institutions/departments proposing to accommodate projects involving the use of dangerous pathogens must comply with the safeguards recommended by the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens in their reports: Biological Agents; the principles, design and operation of containment in a level 4 facility (2006) and Biological Agents; managing the risks in laboratories and healthcare premises (2005).

8.5 Controlled Drugs

Applicants whose proposed research requires the use of drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971, and its subsequent amendments, must seek a Home Office licence directly through the host institution's normal channels.

8.6 High Throughput Sequencing Hubs (Accessing Next Generation Sequencing)

The MRC has established four high-throughput sequencing (HTS) hubs with associated technical and bioinformatics support. The hubs are designed to support small and medium-sized projects by providing scientific, technical and bioinformatics expertise and capacity in the application of high-throughput DNA sequencing.

MRC's preferred organisations for sequencing research are the MRC hubs. Where local facilities are not available, MRC expect researchers seeking MRC support to access services through the Hubs in the first instance. Whilst there may be cheaper alternatives for Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) services, the Hubs are positioned to provide a higher-end service that justifies potentially higher premiums (e.g. expert input at the project development stage and analysis stage) and ultimately provide better value for money.

There is no special MRC fund or assessment procedure for applicants who wish to utilise the high-throughput sequencing facilities within the Hubs. Applicants requesting MRC grant support to use the Hub resource should have liaised with the relevant Hub manager in advance and be able to confirm within the application that the necessary access and support will be available. For contact details and further information please visit the MRC HTS Resources Page.

8.7 Access to Facilities provided by other Organisations, such as Synchrotron Radiation Facilities

While in general charges may be levied by other organisations for access to these facilities and the costs must be included by applicants in their proposals, there are some special agreements and funding arrangements in existence, in particular for access to synchrotron facilities.

Applicants whose proposed research involves the use of the Diamond or European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF) should indicate this in the Case for Support section of the application form. Requests for beam time should NOT be included in the proposal to the MRC, although travel costs associated with beam time usage may be sought through the grant proposal where they are not recoverable elsewhere.

Proposals for beam time are made directly through Diamond Light Source or the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) through whom access can also be booked to the Institut Laue-Langevin (ILL) and the ESRF.

Applicants wishing to use other STFC facilities should first discuss with the STFC and the MRC the basis for charging before submitting a grant proposal to the MRC. Applicants wishing to use facilities at Grenoble (ESRF & ILL) should note that UK access is provided through STFC.

8.8 National Supercomputing Facilities

Applicants wishing to use the National Supercomputing Resources of EPSRC, whether or not MRC financial support is required, should submit a Je-S application. For further information see EPSRC Supercomputers and HECToR.

8.9 Development of Software as part of a Grant

In accordance with Government policy on Open Source Software (OSS), applicants whose proposed research aims to produce software outputs must specify a proposed software exploitation route in the Case for Support. When the project is completed, the software should be exploited either commercially, within an academic community or as OSS. Further information on OSS can be found at www.opensource.org

Note: The policy on exploiting R&D software does not apply to software developed in the areas of defence, national security or law enforcement. Neither does it apply to software developed by Trading Funds .

8.10 Bioterrorism and Biomedical Research

The MRC is aware that in light of global events, biomedical research that involves the use of potentially harmful pathogens and toxins has come under increased scrutiny, and that there are heightened concerns that the misuse of this research could increase the potential threat of bioterrorist attacks. Applicants are asked to take note of MRC's Position statement (see policy document) when preparing proposals.

9. Publication of Details of Grant Applications and Awards

To meet MRC's reporting obligations, some information collected via Je-S may subsequently be made public:

- MRC publishes information on its website for awarded grants which may include the following:
  - Grant holders
  - Research title
  - Abstract of research
  - Lay summary
  - Value and duration of award
  - Host institution
- The MRC may also provide details of grants and grant holders to other organisations and allow the information to be incorporated into their publicly available databases and websites
- Occasionally MRC may also provide information about unsuccessful applications as well as awarded grants
- Data may also be used to provide information about MRC activities

Due to the specific and sometimes sensitive nature of the science that the MRC funds, there are rare occasions when the MRC chose not to publish the full details of an award.

Reasons for suppressing publication

There are a number of reasons why records may need to be suppressed. The suppression may be for a specific period of time or for the lifetime of the award. The suppression would normally prevent publication of the technical and lay summaries, but would still allow titles and award holders to be published.

Web suppression is divided into the following categories and tagged on the system as appropriate:

- **Individuals** – Where there are personal data issues e.g. for Strategic Appointments where the total award value relates solely to the salary of named individuals or where the appointment may be sensitive for a period of time. This flag is rarely used with current schemes.
- **Commercial Interest** – Where commercial interests may apply e.g. where the project title or abstract reveal information relating to IP (Intellectual Property). The use of the flag on commercial grounds is likely to be time sensitive.
- **Research** – Where the research addresses a sensitive scientific area e.g. where a project involves certain types of animal research or where there might be an impact on participant behaviour, e.g. placebo effects.
- **National Security** – Where the outcomes of the research may pose a threat to national security e.g. where a project is investigating something which may affect military operations (e.g. combat stress) or where results could potentially be used for bioterrorism.

10. Post Award

10.1 Post Award Amendments (PAAs)

10.1.1 What is a Post Award Amendment

A Post Award Amendment is any alteration to the terms that the grant is awarded under. This could include:

- A request for an extension to the end date of a grant
- A request for additional funds
- A change to the PI on a grant
- A request to transfer a grant to another Research Organisation
- A request to suspend the grant
- A request to resume a suspended grant
- A request to extend the date of a deliverable on the grant

10.1.2 How to submit a Post Award Amendment

All PAAs should be submitted through the Je-S system as a Grant Maintenance Request

10.1.3 When to apply

All requests must be submitted at least one calendar month before the end date of the grant. This is to allow the requests to be processed. If a problem occurs during the grant which will have an impact on any key conditions of the grant such as a delay in recruiting staff or purchasing required equipment, please contact the MRC at the time of the occurrence. Do not wait until the end date of the grant to submit a grant maintenance request.

10.1.4 What information to include:

10.1.4.1 Requests for extensions

Where the request is to cover absences covered by the RCUK Terms and Conditions such as for sickness or maternity, the request should clearly state the name(s) of the staff concerned, the reason for the start and end dates of their absence. No other information is required. If the return date is not known, a provisional date should be included and confirmed nearer the time.

Where the request is to cover delays caused by for example recruitment issues, the request must show:

- How this affects the delivery of a significant portion of the science outlined in the original application. It should also include an explanation of why the delay could not have been reasonably anticipated or avoided. The delay must be quantified (including dates) relative to the original timeline proposed.
- Justification for the need for the science to continue and explanation of the risks relative to the original aims.
- Full details of financial under-spend broken down into MRC fund headings.

Please note the following:

- Requests will not be granted for the sole purpose of using up remaining funds.
- With the exception of multiple periods of maternity/paternity/sick leave, a grant will be granted no more than one extension
- Grants will not be extended for the purpose of writing up results.

10.1.4.2 Requests for additional funds

Requests for additional funds need to include explanations as to:

- How the shortfall in funds affects the delivery of a significant portion of the science in the original application.
- Why the shortfall could not easily have been anticipated and any required action taken including help from the RO where appropriate
- The justification for the need for the science to continue and explanation of the risks relative to the original aims.

They should include a clear, brief explanation of the science carried out to date.

Please note that additional funds are added to the grant at the same FEC rate that was applied to the original grant. In most cases this will be 80%.

10.1.4.3 Request for a change of PI

Requests should include:

- A brief explanation as to why the PI has left the grant and the details of the new PI who will be taking over. If the new PI has not previously been acting as a CoI on the grant, a copy of their CV should also be attached to the request.
- An assurance that the science will continue according to the aims and timeline as set out in the original application.

Please note this is not applicable to fellowships. If a fellow leaves the grant, then the grant will be terminated.

10.1.4.4 Request for a transfer to a new RO

Requests should include:

- An explanation as to why the grant needs to be transferred.
- Details of when the transfer is required to take place

Please note this is not a quick process to carry out as the grant needs to be reconciled at the original RO before the remaining funds can be transferred to the new RO. Please allow at least 4 months for this process to be completed from the date of the request being made. If the request is urgent, please discuss this with your research office so they can carry out their part of the process ie to reconcile the grant, in the least possible time.

10.1.4.5 Request to suspend a grant

Please note that if a grant is suspended, no funding will be forthcoming until the grant is reactivated. Therefore, a grant will only normally be suspended if there is only one person funded by the grant.

The request should include:

- Details of why the grant needs to be suspended eg the PI is on long-term sick leave, maternity leave etc
- For instances of maternity or sickness, please request only when the person has started their absence
- The length of time the grant should be suspended for. This can be estimated if not actually known.

10.1.4.6 Request to resume a previously suspended grant

This request only needs to include a brief explanation as to why the grant can be resumed and the date it needs to be resumed from.

Please note this can not be done retrospectively and will be resumed from today's date or the date requested.

10.1.4.7 Request to extend a due date of a deliverable

If you are struggling to deliver a grant deliverable such as the Financial Expenditure Statement on time, please contact the MRC via a Grant Amendment Request on Je-s as soon as possible as it may be possible to extend the date to prevent sanctions being incurred.

Please note that for FES' dates can only be extended by up to a month.

10.1.5 Other Requests

10.1.5.1 Request for a transfer of post from one Research Organisation (RO) to another

If a post is applied for at one organisation, then the post transfers at any point during the life of the grant to another RO, the funds to transfer should be equivalent to the amount which would have been applicable had the post been at the second RO in the first place for the period of time concerned. Although prior approval is not required for this change, please inform MRC if this happens so that they can record this information on the grant. Please see below for guidance on how to apply this.

- Where both ROs are Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and therefore subject to FEC (usually 80%), the salary amount applied for/remaining for the post should be directly transferred to the second RO. In most instances, the post will also have Estates and Indirect Costs associated with it. The Estates and Indirect Costs applied for/remaining for the post should also be transferred to the second RO. Where the rates differ for the 2 ROs concerned, the amount transferred should be based on the lower of the 2 rates. If the lower rate is at the original RO, any remaining funds should be repaid at the point of reconciliation.
- Where the two ROs have different rates of funding, eg a MRC Unit and a HEI, where possible the amount transferred should be applicable to if the post was awarded to the 2nd RO for the duration/remainder of the award. For example, if the post was awarded to a MRC Unit, it would have been awarded at 100% with no Estates or Indirect Costs. An equivalent post awarded to a HEI would have been awarded at 80%, but include Estates and Indirect Costs. If the 100% is less than the amount the HEI would have received should the post have been awarded to that RO, then the whole 100% can be transferred. 80% can be used for salary and the 20% should be used to cover Estates and Indirect costs. Where applicable, the lead RO, should show this as salary payments on their Final Expenditure Statement in the same way as if the post had remained with them for the duration.
- Where the first RO is a HEI and the 2nd RO a MRC Unit, the first RO should transfer the 80%, but also a proportion of the Estates and Indirect Costs up to a maximum of 100% salary only. The Final Expenditure Statement will need to show this cost against the fund headings they were awarded under.
- Where the first RO has attracted Estates and Indirect Costs over and above the 100% of the Salary value:
  - The first RO should transfer to the HEI, the 80% figure, plus the value of 80% of the destination HEI's associated Estates and Indirect Costs.
  - If that total value is less than the equivalent value at the destination HEI, then the 1st RO should 'top-up' the transfer total using funds from the remaining 20% of salary which the 1st RO would otherwise be repaying to MRC at the point of reconciliation.
  - If the destination HEI has lower rates for Estates and Indirect Costs (at 80%) than the 1st RO (at 100%), then the difference must be repaid to the MRC at the point of reconciliation.

10.2 Post Award Outputs

10.2.1 MRC Funded Clinical Trials

Results of MRC-funded clinical studies (whether positive or negative) must be published within a reasonable period (generally within one year of completion), following the conclusion of the study. Results should be reported in accordance with the recommendations in the CONSORT statement [Schulz et al. BMJ 2010;340:c332]. Data should be made available in line with the MRC Policy on Data Sharing [www.mrc.ac.uk/Ourresearch/Ethicsresearchguidance/datasharing].

10.2.2 Researchfish

The updated e-Val system ("Researchfish") was launched in June 2012. All MRC funded Research projects (except for studentships) are required to input their outputs into Researchfish.

Researchfish is open for researchers to add and edit output information all year, however the MRC will remind researchers annually in the Autumn that this information **must be updated and formally submitted by a deadline which will be stated in the reminder.**

10.2.3 Publications

Anyone submitting an article for publication which has resulted from MRC-funded research should contact the MRC Press Office prior to submission at: pressoffice@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk.

Appendix 1. Scientific Remits for Boards and Panels

Infections and Immunity Board (IIB)

Normal immunology
Immune disease
Viral disease
Bacterial disease
Parasitic disease
Fungal disease
Viral disease (Global)
Bacterial disease (Global)
Parasitic disease (Global)
Fungal disease (Global)
Host Response to Pathogens
Vaccinology

Molecular and Cellular Medicine Board (MCMB)

Cell biology
Developmental biology
Structural biology
Cancer
Genetics/Genomics
Regen Medicine and Stem Cells
Haematology
Toxicology
Environment & Health
Clinical pharmacology
Large scale cohorts

Neurosciences and Mental Health Board (NMHB)

Developmental neurobiology
Cell biology and signalling
Neurophysiology of systems
Pain, sleep and fatigue
Cognition and higher functions
Mental health and addiction
Neurology & neurodegeneration
Sense disorders

Population and Systems Medicine Board (PSMB)

Nutrition & obesity
Metabolism/endocrinology
Reproductive health/childbirth
Paediatrics
Cardiovascular
Gastroenterology
Inflammation
Musculoskeletal
Respiratory
Renal
Dentistry
Dermatology

Population and Systems Medicine Board (PSMB) (continued)
Trauma/Intensive care
Socioeconomic/behavioural
General Population Science

Trials
Trials – Main
Trials Global Health

Methodology Research panel (MRP)
Methodology

National Prevention Research Initiative (NPRI)
NPRI

Biomedical Catalyst: DPFS/DCS
BMC: DPFS/DCS

Biomedical Catalyst: Regenerative Medicine Research Committee
BMC:RMC

Appendix 2.
Terms and Conditions of Grants

Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants

These terms and conditions relate to grants, comprising Research Grants and Fellowships, costed and funded on the basis of full economic costs (fEC), calculated in accordance with the TRAC methodology (universities and other higher education bodies) or by an equivalent methodology by other Research Organisations.

Grants awarded by the Research Councils are made to Research Organisations on the basis of this single set of core terms and conditions. The Research Councils are:

- Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
- Medical Research Council (MRC)
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

Individual Councils may add additional conditions to the grant to reflect the particular circumstances and requirements of their organisation, or the nature of a particular grant. Acceptance of a grant constitutes acceptance of both the core conditions and any additional conditions. Any request by the grant holder to the council to vary these terms and conditions must be submitted through the Je-S grants maintenance facility and approved in writing by someone authorised to do so on behalf of the Council.

The Research Councils reserve the right to vary these terms and conditions.

Definitions

Research Council: any of the bodies listed above.

Grant: support for a proportion of the full economic costs of a project. A Grant may be either a Research Grant or a Fellowship.

- **Research Grant:** a contribution to the costs of a stated research project which has been assessed as suitable for funding through the procedures established by the relevant Research Council.
- **Fellowship Grant:** an award made through a fellowship competition providing a contribution to the support of a named individual. It covers the cost of the time dedicated by the fellow to their personal research programme, and may or may not include research support costs.

Grant Holder: the person to whom the grant is assigned and who has responsibility for the intellectual leadership of the project and for the overall management of the research. The Grant Holder is either the Principal Investigator (in the case of a Research Grant) or a Research Fellow (in the case of a Fellowship Grant)

Co-Investigator: a person who assists the Grant Holder in the management and leadership of a project.

Research Organisation: the organisation to which the grant is awarded and which takes responsibility for the management of the research project and the accountability of funds provided.

Full Economic Costs (fEC): a cost which, if recovered across an organisation's full programme, would recover the total cost (direct, indirect and total overhead) including an adequate recurring investment in the organisation's infrastructure.

Directly Incurred Costs: costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project, are charged as the cash value actually spent and are supported by an audit record.

Directly Allocated Costs: the costs of resources used by a project that are shared by other activities. They are charged to projects on the basis of estimates rather than actual costs and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis.

Indirect Costs: non-specific costs charged across all projects based on estimates that are not otherwise included as Directly Allocated Costs. They include the costs of the Research Organisation's administration such as personnel, finance, library and some departmental services.

Exceptions: Directly Incurred Costs that Research Councils fund at 100% of FEC. subject to actual expenditure incurred, or items that are outside FEC.

Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC): an agreed methodology used by universities and other higher education bodies for calculating full economic costs.

Funding Assurance Programme: a programme of visits and office-based tests to seek assurance that grant funds are used for the purpose for which they are given and that grants are managed in accordance with the terms and conditions under which they are awarded.

Data Protection Regulations

The Research Councils will use information provided on the grant proposal for processing the proposal, the award of any consequential grant, and for the payment, maintenance and review of the grant. This may include:

- Registration of proposals.
- Operation of grants processing and management information systems.
- Preparation of material for use by referees and peer review panels.
- Administration, investigation and review of grant proposals.
- Sharing proposal information on a strictly confidential basis with other funding organisations to seek contributions to the funding of proposals.
- Statistical analysis in relation to the evaluation of research and the study of trends.
- Policy and strategy studies.

To meet the Research Councils' obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, details of grants may also be made available on the Research Councils' web sites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists.

After completion of the grant, the Research Council may contact the Grant Holder concerning funding opportunities or events, or for the purposes of evaluation. In some instances, the Research Council may wish to authorise an affiliate organisation to contact the Grant Holder on its behalf. It is assumed that, by agreeing to these terms and conditions, the Research Organisation consents to this on behalf of the Grant Holder, but if the Grant Holder prefers not to be contacted in this way, he or she should state this to the Research Council. Grant Holders may choose to opt out at any point, provided they comply with all other terms and conditions associated with the grant.

Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations

Attention is drawn to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs). Research Councils have issued Publication Schemes which set out the types of information publicly available on their websites or published as documents. In addition, Research Councils have an obligation to respond to specific requests and may be required to disclose information about or provided by Research Organisations. In some cases the Research Council may consult the Research Organisation before disclosure, but it is under no obligation to do so. If a Research Organisation considers that any information it provides to a Research Council would be subject to an exemption under FOIA or the EIRs it should clearly mark the information as such and provide an explanation of why it considers the exemption applies and for how long. The Research Council will consider this explanation before disclosure, but it is not obliged to accept it as binding. Where a Research Council determines that a Research Organisation is holding information on its behalf that it requires in order to comply with its obligations under FOIA or EIRs, the Research Organisation undertakes to provide access to such information as soon as reasonably practicable on request of the Research Council and in any event within 5 working days.

In some cases Research Organisations may be directly responsible for complying with FOIA and the EIRs; in such cases the Research Councils accept no responsibility for any failure to comply by the Research Organisations.

Grant Conditions GC1 – GC25

GC 1 Responsibilities of the Research Organisation

- The Research Organisation must ensure that any part of the Full Economic Cost of the project not funded by the Research Council grant is committed to the project before it starts.
- The Research Organisation must ensure that the Grant Holder and Co-Investigators are made aware of their responsibilities and that they observe the terms and conditions of grants.
- The Research Organisation must ensure that the research supported by the grant complies with all relevant legislation and Government regulation, including that introduced while work is in progress. This requirement includes approval or licence from any regulatory body that may be required before the research can commence.
- The Research Organisation is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for the management of research staff set out in the 2008 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, and subsequent amendments. The Research Organisation must create an environment in which research staff are selected and treated on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential. It must ensure that reliable systems and processes are in place so that the principles of the Concordat are embedded into practice within the Research Organisation. It must ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and Government regulation, including any subsequent amendments introduced while work is in progress.
- The Research Organisation is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for public engagement with research set out in the 2010 Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/per/Pages/Concordat.aspx. The Research Organisation must create an environment in which public engagement is valued, recognised and supported. It must ensure that reliable systems and processes are in place so that the principles of the Concordat are embedded into practice within the Research Organisation.
- The Research Organisation must appoint a Research Fellow as an employee for the full duration of the award.
- The Research Organisation must integrate the Research Fellow within the research activities of the host department, whilst ensuring that he or she is able to maintain independence and focus on their personal research programme.
- The Research Organisation must notify the Research Council of any change in its status, or that of the Grant Holder, that might affect the eligibility to hold a grant.
- The Research Organisation must ensure that the requirements of the Employing Organisation under the Department of Health's Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (or equivalent) are met for research involving NHS patients, their organs, tissues or data, and that the necessary arrangements are in place with partner organisations. Where it also accepts the responsibilities of a Sponsor (as defined in the Governance Framework), it must also ensure that the requirements for Sponsors are met.
- The Research Organisation must ensure proper financial management of grants and accountability for the use of public funds.
- The Research Organisation must ensure that adequate business continuity plans are in place to ensure that operational interruptions to the research are minimised.

GC 2 Research Governance

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to ensure that the research is organised and undertaken within a framework of best practice that recognises the various factors that may influence or impact on a research project. Particular requirements are to ensure that all necessary permissions are obtained before the research begins, and that there is clarity of role and responsibility among the research team and with any collaborators. The Research Councils expect research to be conducted in accordance with the highest standards of research integrity and research methodology.

Research Ethics

The Research Organisation is responsible for ensuring that ethical issues relating to the research project are identified and brought to the attention of the relevant approval or regulatory body. Approval to undertake the research must be granted before any work requiring approval begins. Ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and may encompass, among other things, relevant codes of practice, the involvement of human participants, tissue or data in research, the use of animals, research that may result in damage to the environment and the use of sensitive economic, social or personal data.

Use of Animals in Research

Wherever possible, researchers must adopt procedures and techniques that avoid the use of animals. Where this is not possible, the research should be designed so that:

- The least sentient species with the appropriate physiology is used.
- The number of animals used is the minimum sufficient to provide adequate statistical power to answer the questions posed.
- The severity of procedures performed on animals is kept to a minimum. Experiments should be kept as short as possible. Appropriate anaesthesia, analgesia and humane end points should be used to minimise any pain and suffering.

The provisions of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, and any amendments, must be observed and all necessary licences must have been received before any work requiring approval takes place.

Medical and Health Research

The Research Organisation is responsible for managing and monitoring the conduct of medical and health research in a manner consistent with the Department of Health's Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (or equivalent). There must be effective and verifiable systems in place for managing research quality, progress and the safety and well-being of patients and other research participants. These systems must promote and maintain the relevant codes of practice and all relevant statutory review, authorisation and reporting requirements.

Research involving human participants or data within the social sciences that falls outside the Department of Health's Research Governance Framework must meet the provisions and guidelines of the ESRC's Research Ethics Framework. While this research may involve patients, NHS staff or organisations, it is defined as research that poses no clinical risk or harm to those who are the subjects of research. Research Organisations must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for independent ethics review of social science research that meets local research ethics committee standards.

Significant developments must be assessed as the research proceeds, especially those that affect safety and well-being, which should be reported to the appropriate authorities and to the Research Council. The Research Organisation must take appropriate and timely action when significant problems are identified. This may include temporarily suspending or terminating the research.

The Research Organisation is responsible for managing and monitoring statutory requirements for which it accepts responsibility, for example, in relation to legislation on clinical trials, use of human organs, tissues and data. Guidance by the MRC on the conduct of medical research, and by ESRC on the conduct of social science research, provided on behalf of all Research Councils, must be observed.

Health and Safety

The Research Organisation is responsible for ensuring that a safe working environment is provided for all individuals associated with a research project. Its approach and policy on health and safety matters must meet all regulatory and legislative requirements and be consistent with best practice recommended by the Health & Safety Executive.

Appropriate care must be taken where researchers are working off-site. The Research Organisation must satisfy itself that all reasonable health and safety factors are addressed.

The Research Councils reserve the right to require the Research Organisation to undertake a safety risk assessment in individual cases where health and safety is an issue, and to monitor and audit the actual arrangements made.

Misconduct and Conflicts of Interest

The Research Organisation is required to have in place procedures for governing good research practice, and for investigating and reporting unacceptable research conduct, that meet the requirements set out in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2012) http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/Theconcordattosupportresearchintegrity.aspx and the Research Councils' Code of Conduct and Policy on the Governance of Good Research Conduct (2009) and any subsequent amendments.

The Research Organisation must ensure that potential conflicts of interest in research are declared and subsequently managed.

GC 3 Use of Funds

Subject to the following conditions, grant funds may be used, without reference to the Research Council, in such a manner as to best carry out the research.

Grant funds include a provision for inflation based on the GDP Deflators published by HM Government. The value of the grant may be varied by the Research Council during the lifetime of the grant in accordance with the deflators or to take into account any other Government decisions affecting the funding available to the Research Councils. Grant funds are provided for a specific research project. Under no circumstances may Directly Incurred and Exceptions funds be used to meet costs on any other grant or activity.

Directly Incurred and Exceptions funds cannot be used to meet the costs of an activity that will fall beyond the actual end date of the grant, e.g. when travel falls after the end of the grant, the costs cannot be charged to the grant even if the tickets, etc. can be purchased in advance.

Any proposal to purchase an item of equipment in the last 6 months of the grant is subject to prior written approval by the Research Council. The Research Council will wish to be assured that the item of equipment is essential to the research.

GC 4 Starting Procedures

The process for activating a grant consists of two separate stages. The Research Organisation must formally accept the grant by completing and returning the Offer Acceptance within 10 working days of the offer letter being issued. Returning the Offer Acceptance will result in the Start Confirmation and the Payment Schedule being issued. The Start Confirmation must be submitted within 42 (calendar) days of the research/training starting and the start date shown on the start confirmation will be regarded as the start date of the grant. The start of the grant may be delayed by up to 3 months from the start date shown in the offer letter, the duration of the grant remaining unchanged. The grant may lapse if it is not started within this period. The start of the grant may precede the start date shown in the offer letter, but must not be earlier than the date of the offer letter itself.

The start of the grant should be defined as follows:

- For research grants with DI staff: the date on which the first DI staff supported by the grant start work;
- For research grants with DI staff, but where it is intended that staff should not be in post at the start of the grant: the date on which expenditure on any other DI or DA (excluding estates) heading first occurs;
- For research grants without DI staff: the date on which any DI or DA (excluding estates) expenditure first occurs.

Grants may not be started in any other way without prior approval from the Research Council.

Expenditure may be incurred prior to the start of the grant and be subsequently charged to the grant, provided that it does not precede the date of the offer letter.

GC 5 Changes in Research Project

The Research Council must be consulted in the event of any major change in the proposed research, including failure to gain access to research facilities and services, or to gain ethical committee approval for the research, particularly those which make it unlikely that the objectives of the research can be achieved. If appropriate, revised proposals may be required. The Research Council reserves the right to make a new grant in place of the existing grant, or to revise, retain or terminate the existing grant.

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to manage the resources on the grant, including the staff, and the Research Council need not be consulted if staffing levels on the grant are changed. However, a proportionate reduction should be made in the value of Estates, Indirect Costs and Infrastructure Technicians claimed by the Research Organisation in the following circumstances:

1. a post that attracts these costs is not filled.
2. a staff member who attracts these costs leaves more than six months before the end of the period for which the post was funded and is either not replaced, or is replaced by a category of staff that does not attract the costs e.g. project student or technician.

GC 6 Transfers of Funds between Fund Headings

Transfers of funds between fund headings are permitted only within and between Directly Incurred costs and Exceptions, excluding equipment. Equipment funding is ring-fenced and transfers into or out of the equipment headings, whether under Directly Incurred or Exceptions, is not permitted. Transfers will be at the rate applicable for the heading, as set out in the award letter. Funds can only be transferred and used to meet the cost of activity or activities that meet the agreed aims and objectives of the project. While approval does not need to be sought from the Research Council for transfer of funds, the Research Councils reserve the right to query any expenditure outlined in the Final Expenditure Statement, which has not been incurred in line with the Grant Terms and Conditions.

GC 7 Extensions

Research Grants: After a research grant has started, the duration may be extended, subject to prior written approval, to cover staff absences (excluding the principal and co-investigators unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant). The grant may be extended by a total of up to 6 months to cover breaks or delays in the appointment of staff, parental leave, extended jury service or paid sick leave exceeding 3 months (or possibly shorter periods of sick leave if the member of staff is disabled for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 or other exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the Research Council); or by an overall total of up to 12 months to cover periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave. In the case of other exceptional circumstances, the duration may be extended at the discretion of the Research Council.

Fellowship Grants: After a fellowship grant has started, the duration may be extended to cover maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave, extended jury service or paid sick leave for a Research Fellow in line with the terms and conditions of the fellow's employment. Otherwise, the conditions for extending Fellowship grants are the same as apply to research grants.

Any request for an extension should be made via the Grant Maintenance facility in JeS once the required duration is known. All requests for extensions must be made before the grant ends.

GC 8 Staff

The Research Organisation must assume full responsibility for staff funded from the grant and, in consequence, accept all duties owed to and responsibilities for these staff, including, without limitation, their terms and conditions of employment and their training and supervision, arising from the employer/employee relationship.

The Research Organisation must provide research staff with a statement, at the outset of their employment, setting out the provisions for career management and development, including personal skills training, and ensure that they have access to appropriate training opportunities.

Provided it is related to the research project on which they are currently working, Research staff and Research Fellows may, during normal working hours, undertake teaching and demonstrating work, including associated training, preparatory, marking and examination duties, for up to an average of 6 hours a week (pro rata for part-time staff) calculated over the period that they are supported on the grant.

GC 9 Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Parental Leave

The research organisation will be compensated at the end of the grant to cover any additional net costs, that cannot be met within the cash limit, of paid maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave for staff within the Directly Incurred and Exceptions fund headings (excluding the principal and co-investigators, unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant) if they fulfil the relevant qualifying conditions of the employing Research Organisation. The net cost is the amount paid to the individual less the amount the Research Organisation can recover for Statutory Maternity Pay and Statutory Adoption Pay from HMRC.

Maternity, paternity, adoption and parental pay is payable by the Research Council only for directly incurred staff that are funded for 100% of their contracted time on the grant (apart from staff acting as principal or co-investigators unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant).

Grant funds, within the announced cash limit, may be used to meet the costs of making a substitute appointment and/or extending the grant to cover a period of maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave for staff within the directly incurred and exceptions fund headings (excluding the principal and co-investigators, unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant). The duration of a grant will be extended only if the period can be accommodated within the maximum period allowed for extensions. Directly Allocated and Indirect funds will not be increased as a result of such extensions.

Research Grants: Research Grant funds may be used to meet the costs of paid maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave only to the extent that it is taken during the original period of the grant. The Research Organisation will be responsible for any liability for maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave pay for staff supported by the grant outside the original period of the grant. If, for example, a grant ends while a member of research staff is part-way through her maternity leave, the Research Organisation will be responsible for that part of the maternity leave which is taken after the research grant has ended.

Fellowship Grants: Fellows are entitled to take maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave in accordance with the terms and conditions of the fellow's employment. If requested, consideration will be given to allowing a fellowship grant to be placed in abeyance during the absence of the Research Fellow for maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave, and the period of the fellowship extended by the period of leave. Consideration will be given to requests to continue the fellowship on a flexible or part-time basis to allow the Research Fellow to meet caring responsibilities.

GC 10 Sick Leave

The Research Organisation will be compensated at the end of the grant to cover any additional net costs, that cannot be met within the cash limit, of paid sick leave for staff within the Directly Incurred and Exceptions fund headings (excluding the Principal and Co-Investigators, unless they are also Research Fellows or Research Assistants funded by the grant) who fulfil the qualifying conditions of the Research Organisation. The net cost is the amount paid to the individual less the amount the Research Organisation can recover from HMRC.

Sick pay is payable by the Research Council only for directly incurred staff that are funded for 100% of their contracted time on the grant (apart from staff acting as principal or co-investigators unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant).

Grant funds, within the announced cash limit, may be used to meet the approved costs of making a substitute appointment and/or extending the grant to cover a period of sick leave for staff within the directly incurred and exceptions fund headings (excluding the principal and co-investigators, unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant). The duration of a grant will be extended only if the period can be accommodated within the maximum period allowed for extensions. Directly Allocated and Indirect funds will not be increased as a result of such extensions.

Research Grants: Where there is a continuous period of sick leave in excess of 3 months, the Research Organisation may apply to the Research Council to discuss the possibility of a substitute appointment to safeguard progress on the project. Where a Research Assistant has been on sick leave in excess of 3 months the Research Organisation must comply with all their obligations to consider reasonable adjustments before making a substitute appointment. Where a Research Assistant has been on sick leave for an aggregate (not necessarily continuous) period in excess of 3 months, where this is due to a single condition or a series of related conditions, the Research Organisation may request an extension to the duration of the project

Fellowship Grants: Fellows are entitled to take sick leave in accordance with the research organisation's terms and conditions. If requested, consideration will be given to allowing a fellowship grant to be placed in abeyance during the absence of the Research Fellow due to sick leave, and the period of the fellowship extended by the period of sick leave. The additional salary costs for the fellow (pro rata to their percentage FTE on the fellowship) should be claimed, as necessary, at the end of the extended period.

GC 11 Procurement of Equipment

The procurement of equipment, consumables and services, including maintenance, must comply with all relevant national and EU legislation and the Research Organisation's own financial policy and procedures. Accepted procurement best practice in the higher education sector must be observed. For all equipment and services where the contract value is more than £25,000, excluding VAT, professionally qualified procurement staff must be consulted before the procurement process begins, and, where appropriate, at the market research stage, and must approve the order/contract before it is placed with a supplier.

GC 12 Ownership and Use of Equipment

Equipment purchased from grant funds is primarily for use on the research project for which the research grant was awarded, and belongs to the Research Organisation. In certain circumstances the Research Council may wish to retain ownership throughout the period of the grant and possibly beyond. In such cases, the grant will be subject to an additional condition.

The Research Council must be informed if, during the life of the research grant, the need for the equipment diminishes substantially or it is not used for the purpose for which it was funded. The Research Council reserves the right to determine the disposal of such equipment and to claim the proceeds of any sale.

Any proposal to transfer ownership of the equipment during the period of the grant is subject to prior approval by the Research Council. After the research project has ended, the Research Organisation is free to use the equipment without reference to the Research Council, but it is nevertheless expected to maintain it for research purposes as long as is practicable.

Where there is spare capacity in the use of the equipment, the Research Council expects this to be made available to other users. Priority should be given to research supported by any of the Research Councils and to Research Council-funded students.

GC 13 Transfer of a Grant to another Research Organisation

The Research Organisation must send a request via the Grant Maintenance facility in Je-S if the Grant Holder intends to transfer to another organisation. If this organisation is eligible to hold grants, and is able to provide a suitable environment to enable the project to be successfully completed, the expectation is that the grant would be transferred with the Grant Holder. Written agreement to this is required from both the relinquishing and receiving organisations; this will normally be triggered automatically by the initial request to JeS.

The Research Council will wish to be assured that satisfactory arrangements have been agreed that will enable the project to be undertaken, or to continue, in accordance with its research objectives. If suitable arrangements cannot be agreed, the Research Council will consider withdrawing its support or terminating the grant.

Where there is a basis for continuing involvement by the relinquishing organisation, agreement should be reached between both organisations on the apportionment of work and the distribution of related funding.

Grants will not be re-costed following transfer. The unspent balance of Directly Incurred and Exceptions costswill be transferred to the receiving Research Organisation. In the case of Directly Allocated and Indirect costs, a pro rata share, based on the time elapsed on the grant at the point of transfer, will be transferred to the receiving research organisation. The receiving organisation will be required to confirm, by return of an offer acceptance, that it will provide any additional resources needed to complete the project.

GC 14 Change of Grant Holder

Research Grants: The Research Organisation must consult the Research Council via the Grant Maintenance facility in JeS if it is proposed to change the Grant Holder, for example, following retirement or resignation. Where the Grant Holder is transferring to another organisation eligible to hold a grant, the provisions of GC 13 will apply. In other circumstances, the Research Organisation may nominate a replacement Grant Holder. The Research Council will wish to be assured that the replacement meets the eligibility criteria and has the expertise and experience to lead the project to a successful conclusion, in accordance with its research objectives.

Fellowship Grants: A fellowship grant is awarded on the basis of a named individual's suitability to undertake and benefit from the period of research: therefore changes to the Grant Holder are not permitted. The resignation of the Research Fellow, or the termination of their employment, constitutes the end of the grant for the purpose of submitting a final report and the Council's financial liabilities.

GC 15 Annual Statement

The Research Organisation may be sent a statement to return each year showing payments made by the Research Council during the previous financial year for all the grants it holds. Where a statement is required, the Research Organisation must certify, by returning the statement, that:

- Expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the grant conditions, and
- Those grants shown as current are continuing.

No further payments will be made until the annual statement has been received and accepted by the Research Council.

GC 16 Expenditure Statements

The Research Organisation must complete and return an expenditure statement within 3 months of the end date of a grant. Once an expenditure statement has been received and the expenditure incurred has been reconciled against payments made, it will be considered as final.

Expenditure shown in the Directly Incurred and Exceptions headings must show the actual expenditure incurred by the project. Settlement by the Research Council will reflect the proportion of fEC stated in the award letter applied to actual expenditure, within the cash limit.

For the Directly Allocated and Indirect Costs headings, the Research Council will pay the amount shown as spent, within the cash limit, provided that the grant ran its full course. Where a grant is terminated more than 6 months before the planned end date, a pro rata share will be paid. Where a grant terminates within 6 months of the planned end date, estates and Indirect Costs will be paid in full, but Investigators' costs and Other Directly Allocated Costs will be paid pro rata.

Costs arising from maternity, paternity, adoption or sick leave should be identified in the Absence heading of the statement.

The Research Council reserves the right to require the Research Organisation to complete and submit a statement of expenditure at any time during the course of a grant, or to provide supplementary information in support of an interim or final expenditure statement.

If there are exceptional reasons that will prevent submission of the expenditure statement within the period allowed, a written request may be made via the Grant Maintenance facility in JeS, before the due date passes, for the submission period to be extended.

GC 17 Inspection

The Research Council reserves the right to have reasonable access to inspect the records and financial procedures associated with grants or to appoint any other body or individual for the purpose of such inspection.

The Research Organisation must, if required by the Research Council, provide a statement of account for the grant, independently examined by an auditor who is a member of a recognised professional body, certifying that the expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the research grant terms and conditions.

Research Councils will undertake periodic reviews of Research Organisations within the F**unding Assurance Programme** to seek assurance that grants are managed in accordance with the terms and conditions under which they are awarded.

GC 18 Reporting on the conduct and results of research

Where required, a report on the conduct and outcome of the project must be submitted by the Research Organisation within three months of the end of the grant, on the form provided. No further application from a Grant Holder will be considered while a final report is overdue.

If there are exceptional reasons that will prevent submission of the final report within the period allowed, a written request may be made via the Grant Maintenance facility in JeS, before the due date passes, for the submission period to be extended.

The Research Councils have also developed online systems to collect information on the outputs and outcomes of research, and have issued Council-specific guidance on the use of these systems and the timing and scope of reporting that is required. The Research Organisation must ensure that the appropriate system is used in accordance with the guidance provided.

GC 19 Sanctions

The Research Councils reserve the right to impose financial sanctions where they identify areas of non compliance in relation to the terms and conditions of grants.

If the final report or the financial expenditure statement is not received within the period allowed, the research council may recover 20% of expenditure incurred on the grant. All payments may be recovered if the report or statement is not received within 6 months of the end of the grant. Research organisations may appeal against a sanction, but must do so within 60 days of the pay run in which the sanction was imposed.

In relation to the current Quality Assurance and validation project for TRAC implementation in universities, the Research Councils reserve the right to apply sanctions of 75% of the non-compliant rate where an institution is found to be using rates which are materially inaccurate (>10% variance on any single rate). These sanctions would only apply to future applications although Councils may exercise a higher sanction where there has been evidence of significant overpayments to research organisation based on inaccurate rates.

GC 20 Public Engagement

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation and the Grant Holder and Co-Investigators to communicate the research to the public at both local and national level, and to raise awareness of the role of science and research in any related issues of public interest. Special schemes exist in some Research Councils providing additional support for these activities.

GC 21 Exploitation and Impact

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation, and all engaged in the research, to make every reasonable effort to ensure that the intellectual assets obtained in the course of the research, whether protected by intellectual property rights or not, are used to the benefit of society and the economy. Research outcomes should be disseminated to both research and more widespread audiences – for example to inform potential users and beneficiaries of the research.

Unless stated otherwise, the ownership of all intellectual assets, including intellectual property, and responsibility for their application, rests with the organisation that generates them.

Where the grant is associated with more than one research organisation and/or other project partners, the basis of collaboration between the organisations, including ownership of intellectual property and rights to exploitation, is expected to be set out in a formal collaboration agreement. It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to put such an agreement in place before the research begins. The terms of collaboration agreements must not conflict with the Research Councils' terms and conditions.

Arrangements for collaboration and/or exploitation must not prevent the future progression of research and the dissemination of research results in accordance with academic custom and practice. A temporary delay in publication is acceptable in order to allow commercial and collaborative arrangements to be established.

The Research Council may, in individual cases, reserve the right to retain ownership of intellectual assets, including intellectual property (or assign it to a third party under an exploitation agreement) and to arrange for it to be exploited for the national benefit and that of the Research Organisation involved. This right, if exercised, will be set out in an additional grant condition.

There should be suitable recognition and reward to researchers who undertake activities that deliver benefit through the application of research outcomes. The Research Organisation must ensure that all those associated with the research are aware of, and accept, these arrangements.

GC 22 Research Monitoring and Evaluation

While it is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to manage the research, the Research Council reserves the right to call for periodic information on progress or to visit the project team. The Grant Holder may also be asked to attend meetings to exchange information and ideas with others undertaking research in the same or similar fields.

The Grant Holder must make all reasonable efforts, if so invited, to respond to requests for information or to attend events or activities organised by the Research Council concerning the research undertaken. Such events may be held after a grant has finished.

GC 23 Publication and Acknowledgement of Support

The Grant Holder should, subject to the procedures laid down by the Research Organisation, publish the results of the research in accordance with normal academic practice and the RCUK policy on open access http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/openaccess/policy/

Publications and other forms of media communication, including media appearances, press releases and conferences, must acknowledge the support received from the Research Council, quoting the grant reference number if appropriate.

Journal publications should acknowledge the funding source using the standard format agreed by funders and publishers and detailed in the additional information accompanying this grant.

GC 24 Disclaimer

The Research Councils accept no liability, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or liability arising from the research funded by the grant, except as set out in these terms and conditions, or otherwise agreed in writing.

Where studies are carried out in an NHS Trust, the Trust has a duty of care to its patients. The Research Council does not accept liability for any failure in the Trust's duty of care, or any negligence on the part of its employees.
The Research Councils reserve the right to terminate the grant at any time, subject to reasonable notice and to any payment that may be necessary to cover outstanding and unavoidable commitments.

Further to GC3, the Research Councils reserve the right to amend the payment profile at their discretion. The Research Organisation will be advised, in advance, of any such a change. Changes to payment profiles may affect the overall value of the grant.

If a grant is terminated or reduced in value, no liability for payment or redundancy or any other compensatory payment for the dismissal of staff funded by the grant will be accepted, but, subject to the provisions of GC16, negotiations will be held with regard to other contractual commitments and concerning the disposal of assets acquired under the research grant.

GC 25 Status

These terms and conditions will be governed by the laws of England and Wales; all matters relating to the terms and conditions will be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

If any provision of these terms and conditions is found by a court or other legitimate body to be illegal, invalid or unreasonable, it will not affect the remaining terms and conditions which will continue in force.
These terms and conditions, together with any additional conditions set out in the grant; contain the whole agreement between the Research Council and the Research Organisation in relation to the stated research grant. The Research Council and the Research Organisation do not intend that any of these terms and conditions should be enforceable by any third party.

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